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THE
HUNDRED DAYS OF NAPOLEON.

A Poem in Five Cantos.

BY ARCHIBALD BELANEY.

“ Curs'd is the man, and void of law and right,
Unworthy property, unworthy light,
Unfit for public rule, or private care,
That wretch, that monster, who delights in war ;
Whose lust is murder, and whose horrid joy,
To tear his country, and his kind destroy !”

HOMER.

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TO

SIR ARCHIBALD ALISON, BART.,

D.C.L., F.R.S., &c.

SIR,

From your "History of Europe" I first conceived the idea of writing a poem on THE HUNDRED DAYS OF NAPOLEON, and from the same fertile source have I derived much of the information necessary for so arduous an undertaking. I feel, therefore, as if I were not only paying appropriate homage to the GREAT HISTORIAN of modern times, but acquitting myself of a debt of sincere gratitude in dedicating my Poem to you, whose eloquent pen and glowing pages have so often given inspiration to my Muse in the task I have endeavoured to perform.

I remain, SIR,

Your much obliged,

Most obedient Servant,

ARCHIBALD BELANEY.

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PRELUDE.

O Thou, who with thy trident in thy hand,
And golden crown upon thy lofty brow,
Whose empire stretches over sea and land,
The mightiest realm the world e'er saw till now ;
To whom remotest tribes and regions bow—
Not with the sullen terror of the slave,
For lov'd and honour'd, more than fear'd art thou—
Thy smile rewards the sufferings of the brave,
Who struggle for the Right by land or ocean wave ;—

A humble Bard, who long hath sought to raise,
In diapason worthy of her fame,
A song of triumph in Britannia's praise,
Would fain—and oh ! his boldness do not blame—
Blend with his minstrelsy the fairest name
That ever graced a monarch's diadem ;
Whose gentle heart her noble acts proclaim ;
Who loves to cheer, but pities to condemn,
And is of her own crown herself the brightest gem.

Then, Royal Lady, with a patient ear,
O deign to listen to the song I raise,
And let thy smile of approbation cheer
The Minstrel's spirit, as his tongue essays
To sing the story of the Hundred Days—
From Elba's flight to mighty Waterloo ;
While in the war-strife mingle gentler traits :
And never Poet inspiration drew
From a more glorious theme, or nobler listener knew.

PREFACE.

THE scene of the following Poem opens in the Island of Elba, with the escape of the fallen Emperor; and, tracing his brief but stirring career from that event, and during the period known as the Hundred Days, closes with his final overthrow on the field of Waterloo. The theme is one which might well have inspired higher poetical talents than mine; but such as my song is, I offer it to the public, with the sincere hope that my feeble efforts to describe, in poetical language, one of the most glorious epochs and triumphant contests in the history of our country, may be as kindly received as it is humbly offered.

Arising out of the Poem, but without in any way either interfering with its action, or detracting from the general interest of the story, I have introduced a short tale, meant to illustrate the lawlessness of the period referred to, and the injustice practised and injuries suffered by individuals. The character of Count Mourand is intended as a personification of the half sceptical, but heroic spirit of the French soldiery—that spirit which believed in nothing but its own unquenchable courage, and worshipped nothing but military glory and the Emperor; while in De Barrot I have endeavoured to portray a character scarcely less brave, but without any of the redeeming qualities of Mourand—a man who fought partly from a cruelty of disposition, and partly as a means of carrying out his own objects.

In the Fourth and Fifth Cantos one or two softer episodes have been introduced, which, though only ideal, may readily be imagined to have taken place under the circumstances.

THE
HUNDRED DAYS OF NAPOLEON.

Canto First.

I.

When shouts of conquest rise upon the air,
And victory is echoed through the land,
How many a groan of anguish and despair,
From aged parent or from early friend,
With the proud hail of triumph oft doth blend !
And what is glory to the widow'd wife,
With none herself and children to defend ?
She thinks but of her lov'd one slain in strife,
And curses him who caused such waste of human life.

Nor think such imprecations are in vain : —
Woe to the man on whom such curses light !
Heaven may, at times, permit awhile the reign
Of some ambitious tyrant, but when might

Is used but for oppression, and when right
Before despotic power is forced to bend,
And war and blood is his mad heart's delight,
Offended Justice will not long withstand
The retributive cries which mingling fill the land.

II.

Napoleon, smarting from defeat—
Hurl'd from the high imperial seat
Whereon he'd sat for thrice five years,
Midst Europe's slaughter, blood, and tears—
An exile from the land which he
 Had ruled with such despotic sway,
Dwells gloomily amid the sea
 Upon an island grey ;
Fallen from his pinnacle of pride,
 Stripp'd of his power by adverse fate,
As if his fortune to deride,
 In mockery of regal state,
He still retains the imperial name
For which he barter'd truth and fame—
Enslaved his own, and every land
Whose power could not his arms withstand,
And that his narrow spirit found
Relief in such an empty sound,
And deem'd that titles, power, and state,
Could e'er give honour to the great ;
Or pageantry and hollow show
Merit on evil deeds bestow !

III.

With bended knee upon the floor,
With Europe's map before him spread,
Oft would he long and earnest pore,
Till half the silent night had sped.
Where, on its well-known, varied space,
Past scenes of triumph he would trace ;
And then, all glowing at the sight,
Would conquest plan, and future fight ;
And, kindling more and more,
Would deem he saw on battle plain,
Vast armies join in strife again,
And heard the cannon's roar ;
Till, in the magic of his thought,
And with his feelings overwrought,
He saw their columns meet ;
Then, with flush'd cheek and flashing eye,
Shouting his well-known battle-cry,
Spring startled to his feet,—
Surprised to find that all had been,
A flitting, unsubstantial scene !

IV.

Thus had he mused throughout the day,
And midnight's hour had passed away,
Yet still Napoleon,
Wrapp'd in vast thought and purpose deep,
As if he had forgotten sleep,
Sat silent and alone ;

While by the night-lamp, round the room,—
Which only served to show the gloom,—

A feeble light was thrown.

Worn out, at length, with his own thought,
Relief from mental toil he sought

In slumber brief to find ;

And gradually o'er his soul

A lèthargic sensation stole,

And lull'd his fever'd mind : —

Such is not sleep, though sleep it seem,

But a half-conscious, waking dream,

In which those things that while awake

Engaged the mind, will often take

Ideal shapes, and give to thought

Embodiment, and form to nought.

V.

Scarce had Napoleon closed his eyes,

When suddenly appear'd to rise,

A human form ; and yet it seem'd

A thing that few had human deem'd,

Though manhood's stamp it bore :

Pale was his visage, keen his eye,

Haughty his look, his bearing high,

And on his temples wore,—

Inscribed with “glory” and “renown,”—

Of massive gold, a kingly crown ;

And was in regal splendour dress'd,

With diamond star upon his breast :—

A naked sword was in one hand,
The other held a fiery brand;
And, as if from a recent flood,
His feet and legs were red with blood.

VI.

Napoleon trembled at the sight,
In mix'd astonishment and fright,
And felt, like one who tries in vain
To break some wond'rous spell, which still,
Compels him, e'en against his will,

To gaze, and gaze again,
On something horrible to see,
Which yet attracts mysteriously.
At length, while resting on his blade,
Thus soothingly the spirit said:—

“Fear not, thou son of Fame,
And cease thy wonder and alarm,
I come not here to do thee harm—

Ambition is my name!

I am the god whom thou hast served,
Who oft thy weakening arm has nerved,—
And since from me thou ne'er hast swerved,
I'm come fresh courage to impart,
And cheer thy almost sinking heart.

VII.

“What! can'st thou tamely here abide,
Surrounded by the ocean's tide,

On Elba's small, inglorious isle,
And die forgotten, in exile ?
Thou, at whose smile or angry look
Monarchs rejoiced, or trembling shook ;
Who kingdoms had at thy command,
And sceptres gave with liberal hand,—
And who dared thy behests withstand ?
Wilt thou, whose wrath the wide world feared,
Whose laws the trembling earth revered,
Thy fame for ever blot ?
Nor one more glorious venture try,
For empire, throne, and sovereignty,
But tamely live, ignobly die,
Scorned, pitied, or forgot ?
Arise ! and let proud England feel
The weight of thy revenging steel !—
If England's power you can o'erthrow,
The world you gain with that same blow,
With which you lay her greatness low !”
So said, swift as a flash of light
The spirit vanished from his sight ;
And from his slumber, with a start,
He woke with agitated heart.

VIII.

The chilly dawn had scarce begun,
Nor yet was seen the morning's sun,

When, rising from his sleepless bed,
Napoleon, with a hasty tread,
Hurried along, in anxious mood,
And seemed to wish for solitude ;
For still, resounding in his ear,
Ambition's words he seems to hear :—
“ Arise ! and let proud England feel
The weight of thy revenging steel !—
If England's power you can o'erthrow,
The world you gain with that same blow,
With which you lay her greatness low ! ”*

IX.

He hurried on, nor did he stay
To look around, but bent his way

* Napoleon's implacable hatred of England is so well known, that it is almost unnecessary to quote anything in proof of it. His long-cherished project of invading our island was, even in his youth, one of the great moving principles of his life, as the following will show :—“ The Parisians are not mistaken,” said he, at a private party of friends, a short time before the expedition to Egypt, “ it is indeed to humble that saucy nation that we are arming. England ! If my voice has any influence, never shall England have one hour's truce. Yes, yes ! war with England for ever, until its utter destruction.”—*Memoirs of Napoleon, his Court, and Family*, by the Duchess D'Abrantes, p. 157, vol. i.

“ All who had an opportunity of closely studying the character of Napoleon, knew that the predominating desire of his mind was the humiliation of England. It was his constant object ; and, during the fourteen years of his power, when I was always able to observe his actions, and their motives, I knew his determination to be firmly fixed upon affording to France the glory of conquering a rival whom he never engaged on equal terms and all his measures had reference to the same end.”—*Ibid*, p. 477.

To where a grey and rugged rock,
Unworn by time and tempest's shock,
Rears itself high above the wave,
Whose cooling waters round it lave ;
And sitting down upon a ledge
Upon the precipice's edge,
Look'd with a keen, attentive eye,
 All round upon the sea,
Then where the west wave met the sky,
 Fixed his glance steadily ;
And said, while, for a moment's space,
A smile lit up his anxious face—
“ And so, that English watch-dog's* gone :
 Ere he return again,
He'll find the prison'd eagle flown
 Back to his own domain ;
And, ere retaken, many a plain
Shall redden with his foemen slain ! ”

X.

Now, rising o'er the ocean's breast,
The sun uprear'd his ruddy crest ;

* Sir Neil Campbell, the officer appointed by the British government to watch over the safe keeping of Napoleon, had just gone to Leghorn to consult with the British envoy there, Lord Burghersh, upon some measures of greater security they proposed employing, when the object of their anxiety escaped.

The distant Alps first caught his beam,
And back return'd the radiant gleam
 That lighted on their snow ;
Its level rays then lustre gave
Unto the smooth and glist'ning wave
 That softly rolled below :
When, swiftly bounding with the breeze,
Searce furrowing the rippling seas,
A barklet, with the sea-bird's force,
Toward Elba held her arrowy course ;
It came so swift, and flew so light,
'Twas like a fleeting sunbeam bright.

XI.

The sparkling waves she bounded o'er,
And near'd ere long the islet's shore ;
And searce her prow had touch'd the sand,
When from her sprung upon the strand
A man, whose sombre cloak and hood
Betokened monk or friar good ;
Yet, as he quickly forward trode,
Seeming full well to know his road,
With step so firm, and form so straight,
His scarcely seems a priestly gait ;
His dark moustache, and sunburnt cheek,
Of cloister walls seem searce to speak ;
His fiery eye and martial mien
Appear but little used, I ween,

To seek by penance, vigil, fast,
And prayer, to merit heaven at last.

XII.

Napoleon, from his rocky seat,
Beheld the little bark so fleet
 Skip o'er the glancing tide ;
And, as it swift approach'd the land,
Said to himself, " Sure, 'tis Mourand
 That does yon vessel guide !"
Then, rising, hasten'd on to greet
The messenger with welcome meet,
 Who he expected tidings bore
Which should decide his future fate,—
Whether the high, imperial state
 He should assume once more ;
Or, self-consumed by his own fire,
Linger and fret till life expire.
But, as he saw upon the shore,
One who a priest's appearance bore,
 He paused, and muttering said—
" This seems a priest !—what do I care
For such intriguing, crafty ware ;—
 I do not like their trade."

XIII.

Quickly to where Napoleon stood,
Watching his steps in dubious mood,

The priest approached, in glad surprise,

“Now, by the holyrood,”

In sudden joy the Emperor cries,

“I scarcely can believe mine eyes!

Thou, Count Mourand, in this disguise!

Say, are thy tidings good?

How with the army stands our cause;

Or do they still reluctant pause?”

“Sire,” said Mourand, “the violet blue

Waves on ten thousand crests for you,

Ready to welcome to their shore

Their Chief and Emperor once more!

You’ve only to advance;

There’s not one soldier who would stand

Against thee with opposing hand

In all the hosts of France.”

XIV.

“I thank thee, Mourand,” said the Chief;

“And now I hope the time is brief

When recompence more worthy thee

Shall pay thy services to me.”

“I served thee, Sire, with right good-will,”

He answer’d; “and I’ll serve thee still.”

Then, taking off his sable cloak,

He cast it from him o’er the rock;

And, mocking, to the sea did toss

His ebony beads and ivory cross,

Saying, "Lie there, thou priestly guise,
For I hate priests, and thee despise!
I wore thee only to deceive,
As many others do;
Thou'st served my need, and now I heave
Thee to the tide below."
And suddenly placed on his brow
A cap and plume, conceal'd till now.

XV.

A manly form he then display'd,
In military pomp array'd;
He was above the common height,
With well-knit frame and stature straight;
And in his dark and fiery eye
Flash'd forth a spirit bold and high;
And, 'neath the dark moustache it bore,
His proud lip seem'd to curve the more,
That on his brow remain'd
A scar received amid the fray
On Austerlitz' triumphant day,
And told of battle gain'd;
While, ensign of a warrior's crest,
A star of honour graced his breast.
A sword was buckled by his side,
Which foeman's blood had often dyed.

XVI.

The Emperor, with hasty stride,
Walk'd on, with Mourand by his side,
And enter'd soon his palace hall,
Wherein are now assembled all
 His followers and friends,
Who crowd the messenger to meet,
And him with kindest welcome greet ;
 And while they clasp his hands,
With looks of mingled hope and fear,
 And many an anxious glance,
As if they almost dread to hear
 The tidings brought from France,
With breathless expectation stand,
And briefly question thus Mourand :—
“ What tidings ? has the violet
Appear'd amongst the soldiers yet ? ”
To which, while brighter beam his eyes
With joy's excitement, he replies :—

XVII.

“ On twice five thousand warriors brave
The violet doth already wave ;
 The army longs to see again
Its own great Chief upon the throne,—
Even France herself hath weary grown
 Of her new Monarch's reign ! ”

“ Her Monarch long he shall not be !
And quickly shall the army see
Its Chief restored to power again,
And over France in glory reign !”

Thus cried Napoleon ;
While all who heard him answer’d brief—
“ Long live our great Imperial Chief !

We’ll follow ; lead us on !”
“ This night then, soon as it is dark,
Let all be ready to embark,”

Napoleon said. “ Nay, brother ; nay !”
Cried Pauline, with a witching smile,
That might the sternest heart beguile ;

“ Have you forgotten that to-day
You’ve promised that our friends shall see
You dance a cotillion with me ?”

XVIII.

“ Hush, Pauline ! can you trifle so ?”
The brother said, with dark’ning brow ;
“ What ! would you, for a giddy dance,
Have me neglect the call of France !”

“ Nay, be not angry, brother dear !”
Said Pauline, while a sudden tear

Glanced in her beaming eyes.
“ Angry with thee, dear sister ! nay,
I cannot thus thy love repay,”

Napoleon kindly cries ;

And instant, disappear'd all trace
Of sorrow from fair Pauline's face.
"Methinks, my Sire," thus spoke Mourand,
"The princess has most wisely plann'd
 With this intended ball;
For while the busy dancers ply
With lightsome foot and laughing eye
 Around the giddy hall,
Our little host may then, unmark'd,
With greater safety be embark'd;
And who, but they who know our scheme,
Will ever for a moment deem,
That those who seem so gay and light
Are thinking of escape and flight?
While, one by one, our friends may all
Unnoticed, early leave the hall."

XIX.

"Now, by my faith," Napoleon cried,
"The ruse is good, and shall be tried.
Fouché himself—that man of lies
And artifice—did ne'er devise
A better scheme to dupe his friends,
Or cheat his foes, for his own ends.
And now, since early is the day,
To pass a lagging hour away,

Fain would I hear thee tell
That tale which I have heard of thee—”
Napoleon paused, for suddenly

Count Mourand's visage fell ;
As if those words had touch'd a string
That made his heart with anguish ring,
And woke in memory's dreary void
Deep thoughts of happiness destroy'd,
And sufferings which could never die—

Though they might slumber for a space,—
But in the mind corrosive lie,
Till shatter'd reason sink or fly,

Or death's cold hand at once erase
The conscious madness and the grief
For which in life there's no relief ;
Then, with an effort to conceal
The pangs which time could never heal,
Count Mourand thus began his tale—

A tale of vengeance, love, and woe ;
His voice was like the autumn gale—
Now rising high, now sinking low.

XX.

COUNT MOURAND'S TALE.

“ Beside the woody banks of Loire,
Where wild birds meet in summer choir,

My father large estates possess'd—
Honour'd, revered, by friends caress'd;
His only child was I.
My mother died while I was young,
And the last words upon her tongue,
As to her dying breast I clung,
And o'er her couch my father hung
In speechless agony,
With all a mother's holy love,
Were wafted to the throne above—
That Heaven her widowed mate would bless,
And guard her infant, motherless!
I was too young to sorrow long;
Yet often did I wonder why
My father used to fix his eye
So long on me, then, turning, dry
The tear that in it hung.

XXI.

“Time roll'd along; and as it flew,
From childhood I to manhood grew.
One summer's evening in the wood
I mused along in solitude,
Scarcely thinking were I stray'd;
Drawn onward in that peaceful hour
As if by some magnetic power,
Which seem'd o'er forest, sky, and flower,
Soul-soothing to pervade:

The leaves hung listless on the trees,
Scarcely mov'd by the zephyr breeze,
Which softly through them play'd.
A magic silence reign'd around ;
You could not hear a living sound,
Save when some warbler's note
Rose on the stillness of the scene,
And made the air, soft and serene,
With sweetest music float.

XXII.

“ Behind the hills, far in the west,
The sun was sinking down to rest ;
I mark'd with mute admiring gaze,
The beauties of its waning rays,
Which as they faint and fainter grew,
Assumed a fairer, lovelier hue ;
When, sudden, from a female tongue
A shriek of terror wildly rung,
Startling the happy birds that sung,
In all the ecstacy of love,
Among the leafy boughs above.
I paused, and lo, with streaming hair,
Her dress all torn, and bosom bare,
With all the terror of despair,
A lady forward fled ;
While, like a bloodhound on her track,
A negro, scarce ten paces back,
With savage swiftness sped.

XXIII.

“ I stood conceal’d behind a bush,
And saw her wildly onward rush,
While at each step as on she fled,
The negro nearer to her sped,—
So near, that grasping at her hair,
He raised a dagger in the air,
And grasp’d it fiercer, that the blow
Might surer pierce her breast of snow.
But while his weapon hover’d there,
She, with a scream of wild despair,
 Sunk senseless on the ground.
The negro, like a fiend of hell,
Utter’d a loud triumphant yell,
 That echo’d all around,
As, bending down in savage mood,
He raised his hand to spill her blood.
Another moment, and ’twas plain,
Unless some power his blow restrain,
That maiden ne’er would rise again.

XXIV.

“ Like leopard bounding from his lair,
Like falcon darting through the air,
With every sinew clench’d and strung,
I on the base assassin sprung :
We fell,—we roll’d upon the ground,—
Each fiercely clasp’d the other round.

We struggled long, until, at length,
Exerting all my failing strength,
I seized his throat within my grasp,
And forced him soon to writhe and gasp,
Till from his blood-stain'd, nerveless hand
His dagger dropp'd upon the sand ;
And motionless and still he lay,
As if his soul had passed away,
And his last breath of mortal life
Had left him in our deadly strife.

XXV.

“As if her spirit, too, had fled
The lady, like some fair flower dead,
Lay senseless on the ground ;
I o'er her knelt,—so sweet a face,
That beam'd with such angelic grace,
On earth I never found :
While gazing there, I felt a flame—
I scarcely need to tell its name—
I never knew till now ;
And as I knelt beside her there,
And press'd her hand, so scorch'd yet fair,
And kiss'd her lofty brow,
Methought, as the first kiss of love
I stole, her lips appear'd to move.
Breathless I gazed ; at length perceived
Returning life her bosom heaved :

With opening eyes she wildly gazed,
As from the earth her head I raised ;
Like sleeper whom some horrid dream
Has waken'd, with a feeble scream,
She look'd at me, then glanced around
With doubt and fear, till on the ground
She saw her late pursuer lie,
In seeming lifelessness near by :
To consciousness waked by the sight,
She shook with terror and affright.

XXVI.

“ I raised her gently up, and said—
‘ Be not alarm'd, my lovely maid ;
 He cannot harm you now.’
‘ Oh, where am I ? ’ she cried ; ‘ I seem
As if awakening from a dream :
 And tell me, who art thou ? ’
‘ A friend, who has just saved your life
From yonder base assassin's knife.’
‘ Alas ! 'tis then no dream,’ cried she ;
And sobb'd and trembled fearfully.
Essaying to dispel her fears,
I from her fair cheeks wiped the tears,
 Which now began to flow.
And scarce could I mine own restrain,
As I beheld her bosom's pain,
 And saw her looks of woe.

XXVII.

“ Upon a tree, which seem’d o’erthrown
By some rude blast, we then sat down ;
When, trembling still, she said, ‘ I fear
It is not safe to loiter here ;
And yet, before I can proceed,
My weary limbs do greatly need
A little rest, for long the way
And wild the path I’ve come this day.’
‘ Fear not,’ I said, ‘ from every strife,
Lady, I’ll guard you with my life.
The cause of your pursuer’s hate,
And source of your distress, relate.’

XXVIII.

“ ‘ Alas ! mine is a tale of woe ;
’Twill only grieve your heart to know.
I am an orphan,’ she began,
While down her cheeks the tear-drops ran ;
‘ My parents I did ne’er behold ;
My father, as I have been told,
 One stormy winter’s morn,
In Loire’s proud, foaming stream was drown’d,
And on its fatal margin found,
 Two days ere I was born :
The hour in which I first drew breath
Was that, too, of my mother’s death !’

She, weeping, paused. ‘An uncle took
Charge of my home ; he could not brook,
He said, that I, of parents reft,
Without a guardian should be left.

XXIX.

“ ‘He was a man of gloomy mood,
And held no friendship with his kind ;
Oft would he sit and darkly brood,
As if some deed of crime or blood
Rose in his troubled mind :
He spoke to few, and no one e’er
His purpose knew, or seem’d to share
The secrets of his bosom, save
A negro, who had been his slave,
And brought by him from farthest Ind,
And who was now his only friend.
Foreboding was that negro’s eye,—
None dared to rouse his wrath ;
As coo-doves from the ravens fly,
All fear’d and shunn’d his path.

XXX.

“ ‘Near twice ten years have o’er me pass’d,
And each unhappier than the last ;
For every day but added more
To that which I already bore
Of cruelty and woe.
My presence he seem’d scarce to brook,

And often would my guardian's look—
As 'neath his lowering seowl I shook—
Still dark and darker grow ;
And if, perchance, our eyes did meet,
The colour from his face would fleet,
And he, pale as a winding-sheet,
With quivering lip, would drop his eyes,
While fiercer seowls of hate would rise ;
Or, his dark thought to hide, assume
A sudden cause to leave the room.
I knew not why, but deem'd it strange
That thus for me his looks should change.

XXXI.

“ ‘ As time dragg'd on its weary course,
He shunn'd me more, and used me worse ;
Compell'd me among serfs to toil,
And cultivate for bread the soil ;
And labour wearily upon
The lands which were by right mine own :
Without one friend to love or trust,
Or free me from my lot unjust,
Save one poor, humble peasant, who
My wrongs and sufferings well knew,
But yet his sympathy conceal'd
From every eye, lest, if reveal'd
Even to myself, it might have brought
His plans for my release to nought.

XXXII.

“ ‘ But while beneath the scorching ray
Of the meridian sun this day
 I labour’d all alone,
Knowing that none would then be near
To watch us, or our speech to hear,—
For all were wont, at noontide hour,
To shun the full sun’s burning power,
 Which all unclouded shone,—
Pierre—such was the peasant’s name—
To me with cautious footstep came,
And said his heart within him burn’d
To see me wrong’d, insulted, scorn’d,
And that I should be forced to toil
Like some poor slave : his blood did boil
To see his noble master’s child
So cruelly of her right beguil’d.
“ Even now your uncle plans your death,—
Nay, start not ; may I lose my breath
 If what I say ’s not true !
This morning I o’erheard him say
Thus to his slave—‘ As soon as day
 Has given to night its due,
I’ll send her out on some pretence,
So be you ready—with her hence ;
You know the rest—the Loire is deep ;—
Nay, tremble not, for you must keep

The promise you have made.
For while she lives, methinks her eye
Doth look on me reproachfully,
And minds me of that fatal night
Loire hid her father from my sight !'
The rest he could not hear aright—

It was so softly said.

The negro said, ' Will nought else do ?'
' No, villain, she must perish too !'

He cried, and shook his blade :
' And if you fail,—mark well my word,—
In your vile heart I'll sheathe my sword.'
' You need not fear,' replied the slave,
' Loire's waters soon shall be her grave.' ”

XXXIII.

“ ‘ Pierre !’ I cried, ‘ O where can I
For safety seek, or succour fly ?’
Pierre, who scarce with grief could speak,
Said, while a tear roll’d down his cheek,
“ Toward Poitiers, near two hours ago,
I saw your uncle riding slow,
And as he left, I heard him tell
The negro spy to watch you well,
For business of importance might
Keep him from reaching home till night ;
Your only hope is, then, to fly,
For, staying here, this night you die :

But think not you alone shall go—
Pierre will never leave you so ;
Then haste, in yonder wood I'll stay
To guide and guard you on your way :
An hour's delay may seal your fate,
Then fly before it is too late.
These forests will conceal our flight,
And hide us from pursuer's sight :
And soon I hope, from danger free,
My master's lovely child to see."

XXXIV.

" ' Fearful lest preparation might
Create suspicion of our flight,
I hasten'd stealthily to where
I was to meet the good Pierre,
And found him, anxious, waiting there ;
And entering deeper in the wood,
Our flight with beating hearts pursued.
Nearly three leagues we had passed o'er,
And onward still full swiftly bore,
When suddenly a furious yell
Arose behind us, like a knell,
Swift follow'd by the rustling sound
Of footsteps on the leafy ground,
Which, as they fell upon my ear,
Chill'd my weak, sinking heart with fear.
In vain each limb and nerve we strain'd—
The footsteps fast upon us gained ;

We felt 'twas fruitless all to try
From our pursuer's speed to fly,
And breathless paused. O how I shook
With terror, as I saw the look
Of rage with which the negro came,
And mark'd his dark eye's vengeful flame,
As, fiercely drawing forth his blade,
He, with exulting fury, said,
"Ha! I have caught you then! you see
How useless 'tis to fly from me!
How dare you from your guardian's home
Without his leave attempt to roam?
Go, get you back!" he fiercer eried;
" 'Twere better that you had not tried
To fly with this old dotard, who
Ere long his treachery shall rue."

XXXV.

" ' Pierre replied—" Your threats I scorn;
With you she never shall return.
I know the murderous hands too well
By which her noble father fell;
And more, too—that the Loire's deep wave
You've sworn this night shall be her grave!"
More hideous still the negro seem'd
While thus in frantie wrath he scream'd,
"Thus will I pay you for each word!"—
Shaking aloft his glittering sword.

‘Hold, hold!’ I cried, ‘your fury stay—
He only does my will obey.
I left—but what is that to thee—
The home, that was no home to me.
Go, get you back, for rather I,
Than turn with you, ten deaths would die.’
“Then have your wish!” and, as he spoke,
Aim’d at my breast a deadly stroke.
Which would have pierced me to the heart
Had not Pierre, with sudden dart,
 The dagger turn’d aside;
And, ere his blow he could renew,
Between me and the negro flew,—
 While eagerly he cried,
Seizing his high uplifted arm—
“Hold, villain, hold! you shall not harm
This lady, while within my veins
One living drop of blood remains.”

XXXVI.

“But scarce Pierre these words had breathed,
 When, by the negro’s left hand sent,
A dagger in his breast was sheathed,
 While spouted from the mortal rent,
The blood that flow’d within his vein,
Which soon should never flow again.
He gave a shudder, reel’d around,
And with him fell upon the ground,

His murderer—for, with dying elasp,
He still retain'd his desperate grasp
 Upon the negro's arm.
“Fly, Marian—fly!” ’twas thus he cried—
“Fly, Marian, or in vain I’ve died
 To shelter you from harm.
Follow this path—’twill lead you to
The Chateau of the Belle-Boise-Vue;
There tell your history to Mourand,
Ask aid and succour from his hand:
He has the power—I know he will
All that you ask of him fulfil.
The daughter of his early friend
From every foe he will defend.
I’ll hold this villain here while I
Have life—away, my death is nigh!”
I was unwilling still to fly,
And leave him thus alone to die,
When, chiding, he exclaim’d again,
“Fly, Marian, or I die in vain!”

XXXVII.

“ ‘Once more, inspired by fear, I fled,
And from my dread pursuer sped—
Who tugg’d and strain’d with furious rage
His victim’s grasp to disengage,
 But still he held him fast:
So firmly elasp’d were Pierre’s hands,

They seemed like elenchéd iron bands,
 Though he had breathed his last.
Well knowing that one moment lost
In slaeken'd speed my life might eost,
I onward fled, like some tired deer,
That knows the hounds are swift and near.

XXXVIII.

“ ‘ I dared not pause, though sick with dread,
With flagging step still on I fled ;
Till, breathless with fatigue, at length
My trembling limbs had seareely strength
 To bear me further on ;
Weary and faint, with giddy brain,
I pausing look'd around me, fain
 Some spot to rest upon
Would have discover'd, when again
I saw the negro, stain'd with blood,
Swiftly approaehing where I stood.
 With horror and despair
I wildly shriek'd, and turn'd to fly,—
But 'twas not that I fear'd to die,
 For death to me was ne'er
A source of dread ; but to have seen
That monster's fierce, exulting spleen,
While he perchance some deed had wrought
To which the loss of life were nought,
Had given a poignaney to death,
Which scarce had died with parting breath.

What follow'd more I scarce can tell,
For like a wild and horrid dream,
Remember'd indistinctly, seem

What afterward befell ;
Until, as consciousness return'd,
My sad condition I discern'd,
And how, in almost hopeless strife,
You saved a helpless orphan's life.'

XXXIX.

"She ceased, while o'er her features spread
A mantling flush of deeper red :
And oh, the sweetness of that face
Where grief had found a resting-place,
As timid, trustfully, and weak,

She raised her deep, dark eyes to mine,
While still upon her lovely cheek

A tear-drop like a pearl did shine.

'Lady,' I said, 'if I'm too bold,
Forgive me;' while with tender hold
Her half reluctant hand I press'd
With fervour to my beating breast.
'Mourand, dear lady, is my name,
And that protection which you claim
Is mine to give,—and no one e'er,
You from De Mourand's home shall bear,
Where, free from danger, you may rest
Until your wrongs have been redress'd.

XL.

“ By this, the sun’s last gilding ray,
To darker shade had given way,
And sable night began again
To assert his once unchanging reign.
We rose, and as we pass’d the spot,
I thought to see the negro dead ;
We look’d around, but found him not,
For he had disappear’d, and fled.
With quicken’d pace I forward went,
While on my arm the lady lent ;
And as she closer to me press’d,
I felt the beating of her breast,
And, to allay her fear, display’d
Within my hand the negro’s blade.

XLI.

“ We hasten’d on, but still ’twas late
Ere we approach’d the chateau-gate,
And for a space our road lay through
A dark and gloomy avenue,
O’ercanopied with sombre yew,
Through which the moonbeams shone,
And seem’d fantastic forms of light
Disporting in the silent night,
All soundless and alone.
The screech-owl gave ill-boding sound,
As, ambient, it flew around ;

The watch-dog bay'd with doleful noise,—
A raven, with portentous voice,
Like evil spirit, on an oak
Sat muttering his malefic croak.
But evil spirit or portent
I heeded not, but forward went,
And scarce had mark'd them had e'en hosts
Before me stood of fiends or ghosts !
One thought alone my mind possess'd
And swell'd tumultuous in my breast,
And need I say 'twas love ?
But not such love as theirs who sigh
With fulsome fondness for a day,
And find ere one swift moon goes by
Their passion too has pass'd away ;
Or to another mistress prove
How transitory is the flame
That bears, but scarce deserves the name.
No ; mine was passion's self refined,
Enchaining all—soul, sense, and mind,
Becoming even of the heart
A vital and essential part :
Such love as even in parting breath
Yields not before the face of death,
But, soaring upward to the skies,
Like a proud eagle onward flies.

XLII.

“ Such is the power of beauty’s smile
That even age it can beguile
Of settled thought ; my father’s face
Was lit with joy to see the grace
 And loveliness combined,
Reflecting like a mirror true,
Of Marian’s every thought the hue,
 And nobleness of mind.
His heart was moved at her distress,—
He loved her for her loveliness,
Not less than for the love he bore
Her honour’d sire long years before.
I loved her too ; no words can tell
How much I loved !—but wherefore dwell
On themes which even now impart
An almost madness to my heart :
Enough, I did not love in vain,
But truly was beloved again.
I deem’d the day that made her mine
 The happiest in my life—
That she, a being so divine,
By sacred rite and holy sign,
Had knelt with me before the shrine,
 And risen from thence my wife.

XLIII.

“ The feast was o’er, and every guest
Made time fly swift with song and jest.

And quaff'd the joy-inspiring bowl,—
Nought caring for the furious howl
Of wintry winds that raged around,
Joy reigned within with louder sound.
'Twas midnight's hour when at the door
A knocking rose above the roar
Of storms without and mirth within:
Louder and louder grew the din,
And when it ceased, a wrathful voice
Was heard above the tempest's noise,
Demanding instantly to be
Admitted to our company,
Or vengeance quickly should repay
The slightest hindrance or delay.
'Ha! ha!' he, mocking, cried; 'I fear
I must disturb your bridal cheer.

But open quickly, for I'm come,
The guardian of that silly maid,
Whom you abducted and betray'd,
To take her to her home.'

XLIV.

" 'That shall you never do!' I cried;
'This day, before the holy shrine,
She's joined her earthly fate with mine,
And death alone shall us divide.
She left her home—by right her own,
Where misery only she had known—

She fled, her threaten'd life to save
From death, and from a watery grave !
Your power and wrath alike I scorn,
With you she never shall return !'

Scarcely had I said when came a band,
Each with a fiery torch in hand,
Which on the darkness cast a glare,
And showed twice fifty ruffians there,

Prepared for desperate deed :
Obedient to my father's call,
Our servants, counting ten in all,
Full quickly join'd us in the hall,
Ready to fight or bleed.

Our guests, all panic-struck with fright,
Had safety sought in silent flight.

XLV.

" Soon, with a loud triumphant roar,
The assailants forced the outer door,
And in o'erwhelming numbers rush'd—
The foremost by the hindmost push'd :
Fiercely they struggled, but in vain,
One step within the porch to gain,
Until our servants all were slain.
Yet still mine and my father's hand
Long kept at bay the murd'rous band,
For with each swift descending blow
Down fell in death a bleeding foe.

Then for a space, as if in doubt,
The assailants seem'd to pause without
In silence ; and the tempest too,
Which late so wildly onward flew,
As if with howling out of breath,
Paused sudden by the scene of death ;
But soon again with wilder roar
Burst forth more furious than before,
And fiercer, louder, over all,
We heard the ruthless leader call—
' Quick with a torch ! we'll let them feel,
Alike the power of fire and steel !
And hark ! with high reward I'll pay
The man whose hand shall Marian slay !'

XLVI.

“ To execute this murderous deed
The ruffians flew with savage speed ;
With glaring torches on they came,
And soon the house was wrapp'd in flame.
I heard a scream, and springing round,
Saw Marian with a ghastly wound
Lie sweltering in her blood !
And o'er her, with reeking spear,
Red with the blood of her so dear,
The fiend-like negro stood !
All else in frenzied love forgot,
I sprang, and kill'd him on the spot ;

My sword his villain heart transfix'd ;
And as I drew it back, his blood
Gush'd gurgling forth, a reeking flood,
And which with Marian's soon had mix'd,
But suddenly the torrent stay'd,
And curdling stopp'd, as if afraid
To perpetrate such foul pollution
As mix with her's,—heavens ! absolution,
So holy she, her blood had given,
And, saved from hell, sent him to heaven !

XLVII.

“ And there she lay bereft of breath,
Lovely, though in the sleep of death !
Still flush'd with beauty was her cheek,
Serene as heaven, divinely meek !
She seem'd not dead, and yet too well
Her silent pulse of death did tell.
Yes, though a heavenly halo shone
Within her face, her soul had flown !
Yes, she was dead ! and with her died,
In me all joy and love ;
The spirit of my virgin bride
Had wing'd its way above !
A shout, a falling sound, a groan,
Roused me from madd'ning mood,
I recollected that, alone,
My father fighting stood :

And, instant turning toward the door,
There lay he stretch'd upon the floor,
His silvery locks all stain'd with gore,
And swiftly streaming from his side,
His life's-blood flow'd in reeking tide ;
And as I gently raised his head,
Ere yet the spark of life had fled,
He tried to press my hand, and said :—
' Farewell, my son, my death is nigh,
Accept this sword before I die ;

For oft in danger's hour
It served me well,—in battle strife
Full often hath it saved my life ;
'Tis my last gift, and, for my sake,
The life of direst foe ne'er take
When he, nor can resistance make,

Disarm'd is in thy power :
For mercy is the brightest gem,
That shines in victor's diadem.
I leave thee,—more I cannot tell—
Preserve thy life, my son, farewell !'

He ceased, and elosed his eyes,
And calm as when on downy bed
One sleeps, his noble spirit fled

To regions in the skies !
I call'd him, but no limb he moved,
Nor answer gave : ' Now, all I loved
For ever's lost,' I cried, ' and why
Should I, like one afraid to die,

Still lingering cling to life,
When nought worth life to me is left,—
Of all I ever lov'd bereft,
Of parent and of wife !

XLVIII.

“ But for my father's dying word,
I would have died upon my sword,—
‘ Then for revenge alone
I'll live ! ’ I cried, sprang to my feet,
Rush'd out revenge or death to meet,—
But all my foes were gone :
They, like vile treacherous beasts of prey,
Had fled as the first dawning ray
Of opening morn was seen ;
Not one remain'd, and even their slain
They with them took ; pursuit was vain :
I turn'd back to the halls again
Which erst my home had been ;
But now, alas ! no home for me !
For in them, all careeringly,
Triumphant rag'd the flame—
From room to room it revell'd on,
The turret-roof like lightning shone,
The volumed smoke, with eddyng rush,
The crackling sound, and heavier crush,
The havoc did proclaim.

XLIX.

“ My lifeless parent, and my bride,
I carried out, and side by side
Laid 'neath an aged tree,
Where oft, in childhood, I had play'd
In sultry hour beneath its shade,
Or watch'd, upon the sloping glade,
The deer sport merrily.
The fierce borean blast had ceased,
And slowly rising in the east,
The sun his beams display'd,—
But ne'er that dawning shall I see
That aught of joy can give to me
While vengeance is delay'd.
I gazed with anguish on those forms
So dear to me, on which the worms
Ere now have often fed.
Short now's my tale :—With soul on fire,
And heart intent on vengeance dire,
I left my natal spot,
And to the murd'rer's castle sped,
Nursing revenge ; but he had fled,—
And whither, no one wot.

L.

“ Long, long I sought him, but in vain,
And long no trace of him could gain :

At length to me 'twas told,
That he had join'd his country's foes,
And him full many a warrior knows
For martial deed and bold.
'Twas said that few who'er in fight
Met him, but backward shrunk in fright,—
So fierce his look and fell his might,—
Or dared his power defy.
Thinking that we perchance might meet
In strife, where I in vengeance sweet
Should feast my soul, or at his feet
My curses breathe, and die,
I join'd thy legions : long I fought,
And him in every phalaux sought
Of foes on battle plain,—
Mid southern heat and northern snow,
With hate unchanged, in every foe
I sought him,—but in vain.
Already, Sire, the rest you know,—
For what I am to you I owe ;
'Twas you who deign'd my skill to praise,
And me to fame and honour raise ;
And come what may, this sword and hand
Shall ever be at your command."

LI.

Count Mourand ceased,—his tale was done,
His griefs were told, his wrongs made known :

All silent sat,—nor rose a sound
From all the listening throng around,
Save when a sigh the stillness broke,
And in each breast an echo woke.
A tear dimm'd many a warrior's eye,
And stain'd the cheek of maiden shy;
Even he, the Chief, who oft had seen,
With icy eye, in battle keen,
Thousands on thousands heap'd in death,
Convulsed and mangled, gasp for breath,
And mark'd, unmoved, his truest's blood
Inundate earth with reeking flood—
Even he, Mourand's sad tale to hear,
Let fall a sympathetic tear,—
But only one,—for soon his eye
Beam'd with its wonted brilliancy;
And, rising up, approach'd Mourand,
Thus saying, while he press'd his hand—
“My noble friend, you know mine eyes
Are little wont with tears to flow,
But scarcely can I check their rise
To hear your tale of woe!
I've armies, crown, and kingdom lost,
Yet they a tear did never cost,
But your deep sufferings impart
A softening sorrow to my heart.
Deem me your friend;—nay, no reply,—
I read your answer in your eye.”

And, turning to the assembly said—
“Methinks we’ve long enough delay’d :
Come, friends, now for the dance prepare ;
Our time is brief,—I’ll meet you there,
In readiness again to try
My star of future destiny ;—
And if the fates propitious be,
This night, once more, we shall be free !
Already heaven is on our side,—
For that proud war-ship, which did ride,
Watching our movements, even this day
Has spread her sails and steer’d away.”
So said, Napoleon, with a smile,
Left his glad followers awhile,
Who now amongst themselves began
To canvass o’er the purposed plan
By which, ere long, they hoped to stand
Unchallenged in their native land.

END OF CANTO THE FIRST.

Canto Second.

I.

WHAT ho, my Muse! art ready yet
On our prospective toil to set?
Come, then, and teach my soul to sing,
And how to soar on fancy's wing,
Till, high above each earthly ill,
That doth my heart with sadness fill,
I revel in that realm of bliss—
The heaven of forgetfulness.

II.

The sun had set, and day was gone,
In brilliant hall the dance went on,
And there the beauteous Pauline shone
 With fascinating pow'r:
Her breast half seen and half conceal'd,
Her charms half hid and half reveal'd,
And few but he whose heart is steel'd
 With disappointment sour,

Can see, and wish not in his arms
To clasp those love-inspiring charms,
 That tempt yet awe the soul ;
And well, I ween, she knew each art
That pleases and enslaves the heart ;
And how, and when, to show each grace, —
The swelling breast, and smiling face,
The sidelong glance, or, for a space,
 Assume a playful scowl.

III.

Yet she inspirèd not that love,
That holy flame from heaven above,
 Which captivates the mind,
Which, founded on esteem, will glow
With cheering beam in darkest woe,
And to the tortur'd heart can show
Still one sweet tie on earth below,
 When nought remains behind,
To light us on amid the strife,
And miseries of human life.
No, she inspired that transient flame
By passion raised, of dubious name.

IV.

Perchance 'twas well that Mourand's heart
Was proof against all female art,
Or he might have received a smart

From her impassion'd eyes :
But all her skill was tried in vain,
He scarce conceal'd that cold disdain
Which Cupid's power defies.
The image of his long-lost bride
Left in his heart no room beside
For other's love to nestle there,
Or with her loveliness compare !
The Emperor—he, too, was there,
And, lightsome, seemed in mirth to share ;
But soon he and his faithful few
Singly, by seeming chance, withdrew
From midst that scene so fair,
And hasten'd to the port where lay
The little fleet prepar'd to bear
The small but gallant band away,
With which the Chief design'd once more
To seize the crown another wore,
And hurl a monarch from the throne
Himself so lately sat upon.

v.

The breeze was stiff, the night was dark,
Short time sufficed them to embark ;
For Cambronne's energy and skill
Found aid in every soldier's will.
Four hundred warriors, tried and true,
Of the Imperial Guard,—

Than whom ne'er braver heroes drew
In battle-field the sword,
And who their mighty chief adored,—
Already had been placed aboard,
When, with a small but trusty band,
'Mongst which were Drouet and Mourand,
And ever-faithful, brave Bertrand,
Napoleon join'd the anxious crew,
And on at once the vessel flew.
Five ships of even smaller build,
With infantry and horsemen filled,
As if impatient of delay,
Their cables slipp'd and bore away,
Soon as the cannon's signal sound
Amid the darkness echo'd round ;
Squared was each yard, set every sail,
And, bounding on before the gale,
They quickly gain'd the open sea,
Unseen and unsuspected, free !

VI.

O England, thou shalt dearly rue
Thy careless watching !—justly, too.
Thinkst thou, once chased from peaceful plain,
The wolf will not return again ?
Deem'st thou, when scared, the vulture grey
Will not return in blood to prey ?

Or, that the tiger thou hast ta'en
His havoe wont renew again,
Unless confin'd in cage or chain?
Deluded nation! though 'tis stern,
A different lesson thou must learn.
And thou, high prince, of generous heart,
Who took the fallen monarch's part,
And pleaded for the man thou loved
So warmly once, though false he proved,
And even tried, with impious hand
To ruin thee, yet stood his friend;—
Aye, noble prince! thou wert indeed
A friend to him in time of need!
Nor vainly didst thou intercede;
For, but for thee, he would have been
Sent to some distant isle, I ween,
And Europe never more had seen:
But now thou hast a pang to feel,
Keen as the edge of foeman's steel,
To find thou art again deceived
By him whose oath thy heart believed.*

VII.

And Austria, thou, whose hollow pride
Thou coverest with a lion's hide,—

* Perhaps it is unnecessary to inform the reader that this alludes to the Emperor Alexander of Russia, whose noble and romantic spirit was only equalled by his great talents and attainments.

Methinks a calf-skin were more fit
Upon thy worthless back to sit !*
Yet, well dost thou upon thy back
A covering want from foe's attack,
For, shame on thee ! in battle keen
Far oftener than thy front 'tis seen !
For ever wavering, ne'er decided,
By fear or vain presumption guided.
Well dost thou merit all the woes
Inflicted by triumphant foes ;
Thou who, with loathsome meanness, strove
To purchase with thy daughter's love
The friendship of a tyrant thou
Didst hate, yet fear'd to make thy foe ;
And, servile, crouching, lick'd the hand
That chastised thee, and spoil'd thy land.
And yet, there is a glorious name
Whom even thou, as son, dost claim,
Whose glory almost gilds thy shame ;
For nobler warrior never breathed,
Or braver hero sword unsheathed,
Than he, who, in fierce Essling's fight
Was foil'd by overwhelming might.†

* "Thou wear a lion's hide ! doff it for shame,
And hang a calf-skin on those recreant limbs."—*King John*, Act iii.

† When Napoleon heard that the Archduke Charles was appointed to the command of the Austrian army which opposed him, he is said to have remarked that—"The Austrians have previously sent an army without a general, but they now send a general without an army." A small compliment from one who generally talked so lightly of the talents of his enemies.

VIII.

And thou, unhappy country ! when
Shalt thou find rest from tyrant men ?
When shall thy woes and troubles cease,
And thou again repose in peace ?
Is not the bitter cup yet full
Which thou must quaff man's wrath to cool ?
Blood will have blood ! and for that blood
Which thou hast shed in reeking flood,
Justice doth still for vengeance call :—
Alas ! misruled, unhappy Gaul !
Alas ! that such fair land as thine,
Where nature's blessings all combine—
For nature's God, with liberal hand,
Has spread his bounties o'er thy land :
Few countries can compare with thee
In beauty, riches, clime ; and, see
With what luxuriant fruit the vine,
By nature nursed, prepares thy wine ;
Thou art adorn'd, like garden bower,
With every fair and lovely flower ;
With hundred-fold thy teeming soil
Rewards the labourers scanty toil.

And did thy sons use half the care
To live in harmony and peace,
They take thy quarrels to increase,

O France ! how different wouldst thou fare ?

Upon a happier land than thine,
Not sun, nor moon, nor stars would shine!
Alas ! for all the blessings given,
Enough to make thy earth a heaven,
That thine own factious sons should still
Thy beauties drown in blood, and fill
Thee with their lawless crimes, and make
Thy name accurséd for their sake !
Thou sowed'st crime, the plant took root,
And grew in blood !—now see the fruit !

IX.

But to our tale :—Like steed that knows
His rider, on the vessel goes
 Which bears the Chief along :
Less swift the others come behind,
Their banners floating in the wind,
 Which freshly blows, and strong.
On, like a war-horse in his pride,
Bounding away upon the tide,
 Napoleon's vessel flies ;
And high aloft, serenely bright,
The full moon, with unclouded light,
 Shines in the azure skies,—
In which now not a cloud is seen,
To intercept the spangled sheen
 The starlit heavens unfold.

Onward she swiftly sped, and round
Her bows, the waves with rippling sound,
 In glittering circles roll'd :
Onward she flew, and, looking back,
You might discern the shining track,
 She left upon the tide
Afar behind, until the breeze
In ruffled surface of the seas
 The silvery trace did hide.

X.

On flew the vessel, every eye
 With sanguine expectation beam'd,
Though oft a half unconscious sigh
Bespoke the Chief's anxiety,
 Who silent sat and thoughtful seem'd.
But he was not a man to show,
By word or look, in joy or woe,
His secret thoughts ; like book that's seal'd,
His mind to man he ne'er reveal'd,
And all well knew he ill could brook
Another's eye to watch his look,
And none the vain attempt essay'd,
Which few who knew him ever made.
They to each other talk'd with glee,
And joyful seem'd as men could be.

XI.

Before them stood the sparkling wine,
In brimming cups, inviting draught !
Before them stood the juice divine,
But none had yet the nectar quaff'd ;
When Mourand from his seat arose,
With cup in hand, " Great Sire, we drink
To thee," he said, " and may thy foes
Soon 'neath thy whelming vengeance sink ! "
" Thanks, gentlemen," the Chief replied,
Nor answer'd more ; his thoughts seem'd bent
On some great scheme, which occupied
His grasping mind with deep intent.

XII.

On went the ship with favouring wind,
And Elba soon was far behind,
When slowly, with the break of day,
The breeze began to die away,
Until at length becalm'd she lay ;
Unmoved, save by the long low swell,
On which she, rolling, rose and fell.
The Emperor, amid the crew
Moved to and fro, and tried to cheer
Their spirits, and dispel their fear :
And as the morning lighter grew,
With almost twice a league between,
The other ships behind were seen.

XIII.

Hour after hour went slowly by,
Yet still no breeze swept sea or sky,
The very pennon raised on high
Hung drooping by the mast.
At length about mid-day the seas
Secm'd ruffled by a feeble breeze,
Which slowly o'er them pass'd :
Then fresh and strong, on came the gale,
And bounding on with every sail,
Like hound let loose from leash and thong,
The joyful vessel flew along.
Scarce had she started, when was heard
From mast-head the unwelcome word,
Which startled all, "A sail !"
With eager eyes all glanced around,
Scanning the wide horizon's bound ;
Where, on before the gale,
Rushing along with utmost force,
Steering straight down upon their course,
A large ship rose upon their view,
Which for a man-of-war they knew.

XIV.

In council met, some talk'd of flight,
And others of determin'd fight :
The pilot said, " Let us again
Retrace our course upon the main,

And yet, perchance, our danger o'er,
We may get safe to Elba's shore !”
With flashing eyes, Napoleon said,
“ Though Europe's power, for fight array'd,
In all her banded naval force,
Should come to intercept my course,
I never shall return again !
The die is cast, and must remain !—
Proceed we must ; do what we will,
Our destiny we must fulfil !
Be all prepared, charge every gun,
And closer to the larboard run,
And if yon ship a foe should be,
We'll fight for death or liberty !
But if she does not try by force
To intercept our onward course,
We'll pass her by with friendly hail ;—
See how she comes upon the gale !
Quick, then, my friends, I do beseech,
For safety's sake, on deck that each
Conceal'd shall lie, and thus we may
In safety yet pursue our way.”

XV.

Napoleon ceased ; with ready will,
All strove his purpose to fulfil,
Prepared the ship and guns for fight,
Then quickly hid themselves from sight ;

Some lay on deck, some went below,
So well conceal'd that none could know
That they were there, and could not see
More than the vessel's crew might be.
With every sail above her spread,
Swiftly the war-ship onward sped,
And many a heart beat fast to see
Her bearing down so steadily.
On, on she came, and veering round,
"What ship, ho! whence, and whither bound?"

'Twas thus her hail was heard:—
The answer was,—“From Elba we,
And Marsilles is our destiny;

Our ship *l'Imperial Garde*.”
“And how's the Emperor?—can you tell?”

“I thank you, he is wondrous well!”
Was answer'd back; and on once more,
Swift in its course, each vessel bore:
But yet, I ween, the gallant crew,
Within that war-ship, little knew

Whose voice came o'er the wave:
'Twas he of whom they did inquire,
The warrior Chief, the mighty Sire,
Who answer to them gave!

XVI.

Glad was each heart for danger past,
And glad was each to see how fast

Their vessel flew along :
The sun had pass'd his highest zone,
And in mid height descending shone,
And swiftly still the ship went on,
 With favouring breeze, and strong.
At length the distant land they spy,—
Like hazy cloud in level sky ;
 And as their course they hold,
Distinct, and more distinct, are seen
The rocky shore, the landscape green,
And lofty spires, with fanes so sheen,
 They seem'd of burnish'd gold :
They near the land, and now they seek
A shelter'd spot ; a latent creek
 A landing-place supplies ;
On either side a jutting rock,
Round which the rippling billows broke,
O'erhung with olive boughs and oak,
 Which almost light defies.

XVII.

Napoleon, foremost, sprang on shore,
And cried,—“The Congress is no more !”*

* Alluding to the Congress which was sitting at Vienna, to decide on the proper measure to be employed to secure the safety and liberties of Europe against any attack that might be made upon them, not only by the deposed Emperor, but by any of the Continental Powers themselves.

As soon as on the land.
Their mooring was an olive-tree ;
“ An omen good ! ” in ecstacy,
 He shouting waved his hand,—
“ See ! see my friends ! France offers now,
In sign of peace, the olive bough ! ”
 And as they sprang ashore,
All shared in ecstacy sublime,
To be again in native elime,
 In fatherland once more !
And do not seem it strange that they,
Escaped from exiled, island grey,
To such ecstasie joy gave way ;
A Frenchman’s heart is always gay—
 His feelings always keen ;
And who is he who hath not felt,
While viewing home, his bosom melt,
 Who hath a wanderer been ?

XVIII.

As soon as landed, Count Mourand,
With fifty followers in his band,
Went off against Antibes, which they
Believed his summons would obey,
And for the Emperor declare,
Nor to his troops resistance dare.
Napoleon and his little band
Remain’d beside the ocean’s strand,

And with impatient eyes survey'd,
With every sail their speed to aid,
And bearing on before the wind,
The other ships still far behind ;
And ever, as they nearer drew,
The Chief still more impatient grew :
Whiles wrapp'd in thought he musing stood,
Then paced the shore in anxious mood.
At length the ships approach'd the land,
And soon debark'd upon the strand
The little troop, who almost wept
With joy as to the shore they leapt !

XIX.

With words which thrill through every heart,
And prescience of success impart,
Napoleon ranges on the strand,
For instant march, his little band,
Reminding them in fervid strain
Of daring deeds, or comrades slain ;
And telling them of glories they
Ere long shall win in battle fray ;
And injuries yet unredress'd,
Till fired is every warrior's breast,
And keenly every bosom glows
To rush once more amid his foes,—
While thus, with eyes of flashing flame,
Loudly their war-cry they proclaim :—

“Paris or death!” Napoleon cries;
“Paris or death!” each tongue replies;
“Paris or death!” the echo sighs,
As slowly on the evening gale
It winds along the silent vale.

XX.

That shout has ceased;—why pause they now?—
Why looks the Chief with clouded brow?

And why that horseman’s haste?

See how he urges in its speed
His foam bespatter’d, gallant steed,

As if by terror chased!—

He stops: and as to earth he springs,
Loudly his clanging armour rings,—
To ready hand the reins he flings,
And with a look of import dread,
Walks forward with a hasty tread,
To where he sees the Emperor stand
Encircled by his martial band.

Few paces brought him to the Chief:
He doff’d his easque, and, pausing brief,
Wiped off the drops of sweat and blood
That on his heated forehead stood,
While silently, with looks of fear,
All crowded round, his words to hear.

• Napoleon first the silence broke,
And with impatient accents spoke,—

“What news, Mourand? and why such haste?
And where’s the troop with which you paced
Antibes to summon in my name,
And from its walls my cause proclaim?
I pray, your tidings tell:
Say, have you been engaged in fight,
And your own safety sought in flight,
While your companions fell?”

XXI.

Count Mourand heard with kindling ire,
And scarce could check his passion’s fire,
While thus he answered:—“Sire, I hear
Your angry taunt, and mark your sneer;
But better ’twere, before you brand
Me with a coward’s name, to lend
Unto the tidings which I bear
A moment’s space your listening ear.
Hast thou forgot, when Cossack’s dart
Was ready poised to pierce thy heart,
Who ’twas that forward sprung,
And saved thee from the falling blow,
Which, lifeless, soon had laid thee low,
And to protect thee from the foe,
Himself before thee flung;
And oft for thee in battle strife,
Reckless of danger, risk’d his life?”

And think'st thou, then, that now my heart,
Would play a coward's dastard part,
And in the hour of danger fly,
While one remained to bleed and die ?
Death ne'er had terror to my eye,
And still its power I do defy !"
Then, muttering to himself, he said—

“Had other of such words made use,
By heaven ! he'd quickly found my blade
Was sharper than his tongue's abuse !”
Then to Napoleon said—“The band
With which I went at thy command,
Antibes to summon in thy name,
And from its wall thy cause proclaim,
Are prisoners within its tower,
And captives in a traitor's power !

XXII.

“As soon as we approach'd the town,
The *fleur-de-lis* was taken down,
And thy proud banner rais'd ;
Ne'er thinking of the treacherous part
Plann'd in the false commandant's heart,
In sanguine joy we gaz'd,
With glowing hearts, as on I led
The little troop, with swifter tread ;
When, just as we approach'd the wall,
Where scarce was seen a sentinel,

Sudden there started all around
An arm'd battalion from the ground,

Who rushing, with a shout,
Around us closed, before, behind,
On either side we were confined,

And circled round about,
Within a vast and glittering throng
Of serried steel, compact and strong!

I, turning, spurr'd my horse—
My sabre drew for desperate fight—
Call'd on my band to strike with might,
And our escape to force.

But their brave effort was in vain,
For, wounded, overpower'd, or slain,
They all were soon cut down or ta'en!

XXIII.

“Forward I rush'd, amid my foes,
Unhurt, beneath a shower of blows;
Snorting with rage, my gallant horse
Plunged 'mid their ranks with lightning's force.
On, on I dash'd; from my attack,
As on I flew, my foes shrunk baek;
Still on I press'd, still they gave way,
And broke at length through their array.
Not swifter is the arrow's speed,
Or falcon's stoop, than flew my steed;
Ball after ball was sent in vain,

And rattling fell around,
Like drops of rain on window-pane,
Or hail upon the ground ;
Uncheck'd, I flew across the plain,
With scarce a single wound ;
I fled that thou defeat might'st shun,
Nor useless risk and danger run ;
I fled from foes whose power I spurn,
Instead of thanks—to meet thy scorn !”

XXIV.

“Hush !” said the Chief, “I did thee wrong,
By passion urged, and feelings strong :—
Forgive my haste. Now, friends, shall we
Advance, and punish treachery ?
Or shall we rest till dawn of day,
And lead our force another way ?
March swiftly on by Gap and Grasse,
And forward toward Grenoble press ?
For small although Grenoble be,
’Tis worth the throne of France to me !
And once within its walls and towers,
We may defy the Bourbon’s powers.”
The Monarch ceas’d, and every voice
To march to Grenoble made choice ;
Then, and kindling bivouac fires around,
Encampment made upon the ground.
With pickets set, strict watch to keep,
All, save the Chief, were soon asleep.

Deep thoughts were working in his brain,
'Gainst which the power of sleep was vain.

XXV.

Two hours of morning scarce had pass'd,
When forward, silently and fast,
 The little army sped.
A keen, hard frost was on the ground,
Which, with a hollow, ringing sound,
 Re-echo'd with their tread.
No cloud is in the star-gemm'd sky,
Where, from her sapphire throne on high,
The smiling empress of the night
Pours on the earth a sea of light ;
While in the radiance of her beams
Their polish'd armour brightly gleams,
As in a serried, silent throng,
That little army moves along.
Marching on foot, amidst his men,
The Chief himself leads on the van ;
And with the meanest soldier there,
Alike in mirth or toil doth share ;
Their hearts with kindly converse cheers,
Dispelling care, fatigue, and fears.

XXVI.

It needs not that I pause to trace
Their hurried march from place to place ;

All bootless were such dull delay :
High deeds await my minstrelsy.
From town to town they sped along,
And welcomed were with shout and song.
While, swifter still, as on they sped,
With lightning's speed the tidings spread ;
Hamlet and town alike did vie
To show their zeal and fealty ;
The shepherd left his flocks to stray,
The labourer fled from toil away,
The merchant shop and desk forsook,
The student threw aside his book
The mighty Chief to sec ;
While sons their tottering parents led,
And parents with their children sped
In crowds promiscuously.

XXVII.

'Twas at Vizille, that town so fair,
They met the gallant Labedoyère ;
So treacherous yet so true was he,---
True only to his treachery !
False to his country and his King,
He scrupled not himself to fling
At the usurper's feet.
Usurper, ay ! and rebel too,
As e'er unlawful weapon drew,
His Sovereign to unseat :

For, ev'n admitting that the throne
Which he so lately sat upon,
Had been by valour fairly won,—
 Though many this deny,—
By the same power,—the power of might,—
Which was with him the law of right,
By which he gain'd imperial height,
Had he been overthrown in fight,
 And hurl'd from on high ;
And more,—he had resign'd by oath
All claim to crown and empire both !
Then, who so partial as gainsay
That this was act of treachery ?
Go, read the tale in history's page,
Mark well such deeds in every age,
Let simple truth thy reason guide,
And thine own judgment shall decide.

XXVIII.

Whether 'twas love in Labedoyère,
Or hopes in future power to share,
Or other motives brought him there,
 It needs not to inquire :
Deep are the plans of those who play
A double game, that, fall who may,
And rise who can, still prospering, they
 To greatness may aspire.

“Soldiers!” he cried, “behold again
The Chief who oft in battle plain,
 To glory led you on!
On then, my comrades! on with me,
To join the Man of Destiny,
 The Great Napoleon!
Dash, then, these Bourbon ensigns down,
And raise the standard of renown,
 ’Neath which you’ve fought and bled, -
That standard which so oft in fight,
The hearts of foes fill’d with affright
 While they in terror fled!”

XXIX.

Never did necromancer’s wand
Such wonders work in days of yore;—
With shouts, at Labedoyère’s command,
 The Bourbon flags in shreds they tore;
And ere the eye could change decry,
The *Tri-color* did o’er them fly,
And on they rushed embracing those,
Whom they had come, and sworn, to oppose;
But met as friends and not as foes!
Nor judge them harshly; side by side,
These men in many a battle tide,
Had fought and conquer’d, while around
Their slaughter’d comrades strew’d the ground.

Napoleon's heart beat high to see
Such willing acts of fealty ;
And, with a soul-lit, joyous face,
Clasp'd Labedoyère in warm embrace ;
Then, turning to the soldiers, said,
While high he waved his naked blade,—

XXX.

“ Soldiers, in yonder distant isle,
In yonder spot of my exile,
I saw your wrongs, I heard your voice ;
I'm come, the Monarch of your choice !^v
I saw the wrongs, confusion, and
Injustice which o'erwhelm'd the land !
I saw a Bourbon King's misrule,—
Who is at best but England's tool,
Who, weak, contemptible, and vain,
Treated your triumphs with disdain !
And, while the glorious are neglected,
Each worthless favourite is protected ;
And servile minions rule the state,
Whose insolence insults the great !
Ye heroes of Marengo's fight,
Of Austerlitz, and Jena's might !
Ye who have conquerors stood within
Cairo, Vienna, Rome, Berlin,—

* “ The Sovereign of the people's choice : ” the Duchess D'Abr
uses this expression in her Memoirs.

Can ye behold your honour stain'd,
Your conquests lost, yourselves disdained—
See all your greatness overthrown,—
 Tamely to knaves and cowards yield
The glories which your valour won
 In many a battle-field ?
No ! never can ye so forget
Your high renown, as this permit !

XXXI.

“ Come, then, the standards join once more,
Which ye triumphant ever bore—
The Eagle and the *Tri-color* !
 In victory's proud hour.
That despicable king your foes,
To your disgrace, on you impose,
 Reigns but by foreign power !
What claim have they to interfere,
With rights to every Frenchman dear ?
Who have the power to be our masters ?
None ! Though we've endured disasters
We're Frenchmen still : and still that name
Shall make our vaunting foes grow tame !
 Then, forward ! let us on !
Triumph ! revenge ! and victory !
Rewards ! fresh honours ! liberty !
 Doth wait for every one !

But blackest infamy to those,
With traitor's death, who join our foes !”
He ceas'd, amid a deafening roar
Of “ Live !—long live our Emperor !”

XXXII.

Like mountain stream which, at its source,
A child may turn, or stem its force—
But as it gurgling rolls along,
Its speed improves, and grows more strong—
Till, fed by many a rill, it flows
A mighty flood, which mightier grows,
Sweeping along, in sullen pride,
To meet and mix with ocean's tide—

Such was the Chieftain's course ;
His band increasing every hour,
And they who came to check his power,
Served but to swell his force.

Forward they marched : the sun's last ray
Had from their armour pass'd away,
When, with the waning light of day,
Grenoble met their view.

Upon her lofty vanes still gleam'd
A golden beam, which lingering seem'd
'Mid ether's azure hue ;
You might have thought a rainbow bright
Had fallen from ethereal height,

And hung in fragments there ;
Or that the gems of precious stone,
Beheld in heaven by good Saint John,
Were floating in the air.

XXXIII.

They hasten'd on ; but as they near'd
The town, upon the walls appear'd
A bustling, warlike throng,
Who seem'd preparing to withstand
The bold invader's grasping hand,
And bid defiance to his band,
And plann'd resistance strong.
No *Tri-color* was hoisted there,
No Eagle floated in the air,
Of friends within to tell ;
But through the dusk of gathering night,
The *Fleur-de-lis* waved on each height,
And made each heart, as well it might,
With anxious thoughts to swell.

XXXIV.

Napoleon still was undismayed,
And forward walk'd ; his army stay'd
A space behind at his command,
And all remained except Mourand,
Who with his Chieftain went.
Onward Napoleon calmly paced,

Displaying neither fear nor haste,
As nearer and more near he faced
 The hostile battlement.
And silently he fix'd his eye
Upon the walls so strong and high,
Where many a red torch brightly glar'd,
And dark battalion stood prepared,
In dense array, as if for fight,
Amid the dark'ning shades of night.
Thus for a moment's space he stood,
Scanning the heights in silent mood.
A deep, dark trench before him lay,
 Between him and the wall :
"Return, vain man!" it seem'd to say,
 "Lest worse to thee befall."
The rampired battlements were high,
And well his army might defy.

XXXV.

Standing upen a height, so near,
That they upon the walls might hear,
He laid his hand upon his breast,
And thus the garrison address'd :—
"Soldiers of France! behold the man
Who gave you glory, freedom, fame!
Then pierce his bosom, if you can,
And to surrounding lands proclaim
That ye have perfected your shame!

While ages shall indignant hear
The tale of treachery and fear—
How he who found your native land
Swift drifting on to ruin's strand,
And sinking fast amid the roar
Of raging billows on the shore,
Which, every moment, wilder grew—
Who, midst impending dangers flew,
Seized her deserted helm, and steer'd
Her course, till rocks and surge were clear'd,
And bore her on to height of power,
And fame she knew not till that hour—
And, having conquer'd every foe,
That country dealt the fatal blow
Which laid her benefactor low !

XXXVI.

“ Soldiers ! I'm come to free your chains,
And wash your glory from the stains
Upon it cast by hateful foes,
Who smile as they behold your woes,
And laugh to see your bosom's throes,
 With exultation high !
But if you'd rather choose to be
The willing slaves of treachery,
Than fight your native land to free,
 Or for your freedom die,
Go, cowards ! I forbid ye not ;
But mark me well, ere from this spot

I turn and leave you to your fate,
Choose and decide, ere 'tis too late !
Think not my power is now so small
That you can ever me appal.
Beware ! for if ye rouse my ire,
This town I'll sack and burn with fire ;
That other cities may discern,
And from its fate a lesson learn ! ”

XXXVII.

He ceased, but no reply was heard,
No gladd'ning sound, no welcome word,
 Came from the walls, where stood,
Each with his musket in his hand,
And only seem'd to wait command
 To spill the Emperor's blood :
Who sudden, then, to Mourand turned,
While kindling wrath within him burn'd.
And said, “ Mourand, our forces bring,
For ere the midnight hour doth ring,
 Our flags shall be unfurl'd
In triumph on yon rampart's height ;
And long ere dawns the morning light,
They 'll know the power, and feel the might,
 That oft has shook the world ! ”
Count Mourand sped at his command,
And soon reach'd the impatient band,
Who, soon as they were told that they
Were to prepare for battle fray,

Burst forth with such a shout as ne'er
Unheeded fell on foeman's ear,
Which echoing o'er Grenoble went :
The troops upon the battlement,
Were startled by the well-known cry,—
“*Vive l'Empéreur !* France, and Victory !”

XXXVIII.

Meantime, Napoleon, left alone,
Paced slowly to and fro,
And to himself in thoughtful tone,
Thus musing said, and slow :—
“Now is the crisis of my fate,
The hour that must decide my state,
If I'm to fall 'neath foemen's hate,
'Twill be into a grave !
Proceed I must—retreat were vain ;
E'en did I wish to turn again,
And fly across the wave,
'Twould but the swifter on my head
The ruin bring from which I fled :—
It cannot be, by such a town,
That I am doom'd to be o'erthrown !
No, no ! I must—I shall proceed ;—
Nerved is my heart for daring deed,
I must, by heaven, I will succeed !
That town, although so small it be,
Confirms the throne of France to me.”

XXXIX.

He paused, for suddenly his ear
Heard footsteps swift approaching near,
And instantly before him stood
A manly form in cloak and hood :
Surprised, Napoleon drew his blade,
“What ho! who comes?” he quickly said;
“Approach not nearer ere you speak
Your purpose here, and whom you seek.”
“Sire, favour’d by the shades of night,
I’ve come from yonder rampart’s height
 To greet you with good cheer :—
There’s scarce a soldier on yon wall
Who doth not wish the Bourbon’s fall,
 And joys to see you here.
But cautious yet you must proceed,
And toward yon gate your forces lead
 Where two red torches shine.
Your friends would suffer in the town,
If to the Royalists ’twere known
 We favour’d your design ;
Yet fear not, Sire, whate’er may seem
To interrupt you—like a dream
 All hindrances shall flee :
For, even did your foes command,
There’s not a man would lift his hand
 Against your Majesty !”

Abrupt, the stranger paus'd; the sound
Of prancing steeds, that paw'd the ground,
 Came swiftly on his ear;
While crash of wheels that roll'd along,
And rising hum of marching throng,
 Told of an army near.
“Now I must to my post—farewell!”
The stranger said. “Hark to the swell
 Of that low bugle-note!
It tells of friends:—when next your ear
That trumpet's signal sound doth hear,
Rush forward in the bright career
 That is your glorious lot!”
He ceased; and ere Napoleon could
An answer give, alone he stood,
 For sudden as he came,
Amid the darkness of the night,
The stranger vanish'd from his sight,
 Breathing the Emperor's name.

XL.

By this the army nearer drew,
 Who hail'd him as they came,—
“Long live the Violet so blue,
 And to the Lily shame!
Long live our Little Corporal, who
 Raised us to deathless fame!

For him we'll fight, for him we'll die,
Till every foe doth bleed or fly ! ”
Soon as their joyous shout was hush'd,
In silence on the army rush'd,
Toward the drawbridge gate, where gleam'd
The lights their Chief as signals deem'd :
But none approach'd the bridge to lower,
That with his troops he might pass o'er ;
Nor bugle sound was heard.
The Chief, impatient of delay,
Cried, “ Forward with artillery !
And, quick, let every engine play ! ”
And swiftly at his word,
A battery of guns was made,
And only for the signal stay'd,
To vomit forth its flame :
Napoleon seized a lighted spark,
And with unerring aim,
A cannon levell'd at the mark,
And suddenly amid the dark,
Burst glaring flash, and eddying smoke,
And forth, with voice of thunder, broke
The cannon's roar around.
The ball, unswerving in its course,
The drawbridge struck, which, to its force,
Returned a heavy sound,
That told how little 'twould avail,
That bridge with cannon to assail.

XLI.

Just as the ball fell from the bridge,
Like shepherd's lute on mountain ridge
 Was heard a trumpet's sound ;
At first it came forth soft and slow,
Then louder and more loud did grow,
Till, with a simultaneous flow,
 The clangour spread around,
As if a thousand clarions there,
Burst forth at once upon the air.
And lo ! they seemed to break the spell,
For midst that sound the drawbridge fell !
"On !" the Imperial Leader cried,
And forward, like a mighty tide,
 His army rushed along.
"Forward, brave men ! Grenoble's ours !
Our friends possess its walls and towers !
And now we may our foemen's powers
 Defy, howe'er so strong !"

XLII.

"Forward !" rang in each soldier's ear,
Nor other word delay'd to hear,
But with a loud, tremendous cheer,
 Rush'd steadily and fast.
In solid column on they went,
The shaking planks beneath them bent,
 As o'er the bridge they pass'd.

Frantic with joy, a mighty crowd,
Rush'd from the town, with clamours loud
 As Niagara's roar ;
The rulers of the city came,
Owning the great usurper's claim,
Allegiance plighted to his name,
 And shouting, "*Vive l'Empéreur !*"

XLIII.

Full merrily they pass'd the night,
And long ere dawn'd the morning light,
 That town behind them lay.
And as they gaily march'd along,
A numerous, mix'd, and motley throng,
With shout, huzzah, and merry song,
 They cheer'd them on their way.
All day they marched : at evening's close
They halted for a short repose ;
But soon again, with speed renew'd,
Their onward course in haste pursued.
Again the sun had pass'd his height,
And westward wing'd his airy flight ;
And gliding down the clear blue sky,
That smil'd like gentle maiden's eye,
Fair Lyons to their view display'd,
In all her majesty array'd.

XLIV.

There sweeping rolls the rapid Rhone,
And smoothly flows the beauteous Saone,
Like some vast serpent gliding on ;
Both brightly shining in the beam
That rests upon their unstain'd stream,
Till, mixing in united tide,
They sweep along in noble pride.
Alas ! how often have those waves
Of victims been the watery graves !
And oh ! how often has that flood
Been stemm'd with dead, and dyed with blood !
And frantic shriek, and dying groan
Been wafted o'er thy waves, fair Rhone ;
While victims' yells and murderer's voice,
Have rung above thy troubled noise !

XLV.

O God ! fair city, thine has been
A fate the world has seldom seen !
And were those waves that sweep
So swiftly by, deep as they flow,
Tears shed in memory of thy woe,
'Twere not too much to weep !
Methinks I see the traces yet,
Of deeds the world can ne'er forget ;
And crimes perform'd by human hand,
More black than demon ever plann'd !

Methinks a lovely babe I see
Sit smiling on its mother's knee,
While she, in its affection blest,
Clasps it in rapture to her breast ;
But suddenly a ruthless band
Of blood-stain'd murderers round her stand ;
Vainly for mercy she implores,
And kneels to villains she abhors,
And, weeping, screams in anguish wild,—
“ Oh, spare ! oh, spare my helpless child ! ”
In vain are youth and lovely charms,
Fiercely they seize her in their arms ;
Her agony of soul they mock,
And, shouting, bear her to the block !
While there, beside the guillotine,
D'Herbos's hard heart enjoys the scene !
That monster, who, hiss'd from the stage,
Now plays a part in history's page ;
He, who each noble feeling lacked,
Now does the deeds he could not act.*
See, how he stands with savage eyes,
Mocking his vietim's agonies !

* This infamous monster, a few years previous to the time alluded to in the text, had actually made his appearance on the stage of one of the theatres in Lyons, from which he was hissed off in a most contemptuous manner. The horrible cruelties which he afterwards perpetrated in that same city were, as is generally acknowledged, in all probability, executed in revenge for his theatrical failure and disgrace.

XLVI.

In calm despair the mother stands,
Sinks on her knees, and elaps her hands,
Imploring Heaven's sustaining power
To help her in that fearful hour.
Then rising up, in transports wild,
Embracing, hugs her elinging child.
See with what energy she pleads,
And for her infant intercedes
 With all a mother's love!—
In accents which might turn away
The hungry lion from his prey,
 And even to pity move
The famish'd wolf that roams the wood,
Or tiger in its fiereest mood.
Glutting his heart with human woe,
Thirsting to see her life's blood flow,
D'Herbos exelains, in mocking mood,
"That lady is of gentle blood ;—*
Go, take her brattling from her breast,
And hush it quickly to its rest."

XLVII.

In vain, 'mid brutal jests and sneers,
Are infant's screams and mother's tears ;
Insulting even her stainless charms,
They tear her infant from her arms :

* To be of gentle, or aristocratic blood, was enough to insure the condemnation of the victims of revolutionary barbarity under the *Reign of Terror*.

Vain are her struggles, vain her cries,—

They only mock her agonies!

Its life's blood flows before her eyes

In red and reeking tide.

“Now, murderous villain, do thy worst!

By man abhorr'd—by Heaven accurst!”

To D'Herbos thus she cried;

“And may thy cruel bosom know

The pangs which now I scorn to show;

And may thy diabolic heart

Be rack'd with pain, with torture wrung,

Till, seorch'd thy breast, and parch'd thy tongue.

Thy soul endures an equal smart!

Now do your worst!” she, ceasing, says,

As on the block her head she lays.

Yet streaming with her infant's gore,

The axe falls with unerring stroke—

Her snow-white neck receives the shock;

Her severed head rolls from the block—

Her life's blood flows—death's pang is o'er!

XLVIII.

This is no isolated case

Of murderous deed within that place—

Ten thousand such were done!

But not a trace doth now remain

That may the gentlest bosom pain,

Save when the mind recalls again

The horrors that are gone.

All, all is peaceful now and fair,
And shouts of joy ring through the air
 From thrice ten thousand throats.
From steeple, tower, and turret high,
From battlement and balcony,
 The Eagle-banner floats.
Tumultuous crowds fill every street,
Thousands on thousands rush to meet
 The great Imperial Chief,—
He whom they lately sought to slay,
While struggling with adversity,
 And few to soothe his grief!
With shoutings of "*Vive l'Empereur!*"
Loud as the cannon's thundering roar,
 They welcome Bonaparte.
Now, when success upon him dawns,
The cringing crowd around him fawns
 With false and hollow heart.

XLIX.

Here now we leave them for a space:
My Muse, we've found a halting place,
 Where thou may'st rest thy wing.
Nor long shall we our tale delay;
Who lists may read, or turn away—
It little boots what eynies say,
 I love the lay I sing.

END OF CANTO THE SECOND.

Canto Third.

I.

SURROUNDED by his courtiers gay,
King Louis sat upon his throne ;
His fawning minions strove to pay
The praises which so lately they
Gave to Napoleon.
Their adulations pleased the King,
And suited well his ear :
How gross soc'er their flattering,
He—poor, impotent, soulless thing !—
Ne'er thought them insincere.
And thus the good, the wise, the great,
Whose glorious names adorn'd the state,
Were spurn'd, o'erlook'd, despised, neglected,
And every proffer'd aid rejected ;
While those who had no other claim
Than, it may be, an ancient name,
Back'd by presumptuous arrogance,
Were rulers of the King and France.

II.

The King a festive day had passed,
And ev'ning's clouds were gathering fast,
When, riding with impatient speed,
A horseman urged his foaming steed,
And, lighting at the palace gate,
Important, sought the hall of state.
His was no supple courtier's bow,
Blunt was his speech, as, bending low,
 He thus the King address'd :—
“ My royal Sire, the Eagle's flown—
The great usurper of thy throne
 Again hath raised his crest ;
And now in triumph doth advance,
To hurl thee from the throne of France,
 And seize again thy crown.
The soldiers to his banners crowd,
And fly to join his standards proud,
 And dash thy ensigns down.
The country echoes with his name,
And Lyons doth his cause proclaim ! ”

III.

The startled king these tidings heard,
And shook with terror at each word
 That fell upon his ear.
The courtiers mark'd the monarch's dread,
And turning to the courier said,
 With proud insulting sneer :—

“And who art thou! that dar’st presume,
Before our Sovereign to come
 With such a craven tale;
Think’st thou, like thee, we’ll fly and cower,
Before that haughty rebel’s power,
 Or the usurper hail?
Thy words betoken what thou art,—
A knave, or coward at the heart!”

IV.

With mingled scorn, and glance of fire,
The stranger heard with kindling ire,
 And scarce could check his rage;
Twice on his sword his hand he laid,
And twice to draw it forth essay’d,
And twice a powerful effort made,
 His passion to assuage:
Then with contempt, and keenest scorn,
The courtiers’ taunts he did return:—
“I am a soldier,” thus he said,
“And should have proved it with my blade,
But for the presence of your King,
Before whom now with scorn, I fling
Back in your face a coward’s name;
Or, if a soldier’s rights ye claim,
Have my defiance! but beware
How ye Macdonald’s vengeance dare!”
While saying this he doff’d his casque,
Which did his features slightly mask.

V.

Did'st thou ere see a hungry hound,
With ears erect, prepared to bound,
And fiercely watching when it may
Best seize on its intended prey?—
So, round Macdonald, stood a crowd
Of carpet heroes, vain and proud,
And each more anxious than the rest
To pierce the bold intruder's breast;
But when they saw the Marshal stand
Uncover'd, with his helm in hand,
 And heard him tell his name,
Like frighten'd eurs they backward shrunk,
And round the room in terror slunk,
 O'erpowered with fear and shame.

VI.

The Marshal then on bended knee,
Address'd the King thus courteously:—
“My gracious Sire, it grieves my heart
Such evil tidings to impart,
Yet, though they should thy bosom rend,
On them thy safety may depend.
In vain thy royal brother tried
To stay desertion's rapid tide;
Soon as it reach'd the army's ear
That the Imperial Chief drew near,

The banners which the soldiers bore,
The oaths which they so lately swore,
 Were broken and disdain'd—
They to Napoleon's standard fled :
Of all the host thy brother led,

 One man alone remained
Faithful amid that martial throng,
And with his Highness fled to Ghent ;
While I, to warn thee of the fate
That overhangs thy throne and state,

 Have ridden day and night.
Delay not, or thou may'st repent—
If thou thy capture would prevent,
 Prepare for instant flight !”

VII.

Macdonald ceased ; but still the King,
O'erpower'd with fear sat trembling ;
At length the Monarch silence broke,
And thus in quivering accents spoke :—

“ Brave Marshal, pardon, I beseech,
The sudden agitation which
 Your tidings have inspired ;
And for the promptitude and zeal
With which you've hasten'd to reveal,

 How, by ambition fired,
That rebel leads a hostile band
Against his king and native land,

 Accept my grateful thanks.

Then let it be our instant care,
Call out our soldiers, and prepare
 To overthrow his ranks.
Our army yet is strong, and may
If led by you, that traitor slay,
And gladly now, into your hand
I give the ensign of command."

VIII.

"Forgive me, Sire," Macdonald said,
 "'Gainst him I'll never draw my blade :
No, no ! this sabre, Sire, which he,
In pledge of friendship, gave to me,
Shall ne'er be drawn in battle strife,
And turn'd against the giver's life !
His banner was the beacon light,
Which, ever, in the darkest fight,
The path did always show to me
Of glory, and of victory !
His fame, his triumphs I have shared,
With him in battle-field I've dared
The conflict's rage ; and, side by side,
We've danger scorn'd, and death defied.
While he was Monarch of our land,
He was my Sovereign less than friend ;
'Twas he who on my temple set
A golden, ducal, coronet.

IX.

“ And though his abdication now
Has freed my faith from every vow ;
And though I’ve pledged me to thy cause,
And vow’d obedience to thy laws,
Yet I have sworn to him an oath,—
And never shall belie my troth,—
That should misfortune ever lower,
Or enemies o’erthrow his power,
That I should never raise my hand,
Against the man who was my friend :
And, though my Sovereign now thou art,
I love him still with all my heart ;
And never shall this sword of mine
Against my old companion shine !
But, though I cannot him oppose,
Think not that I will join thy foes ;
No, no ! my pledge of fealty,
The oath which I have sworn to thee,
Shall ne’er forgot or broken be ! ”

’Twas thus Macdonald said—
And faithfully he kept his oath :
When all had broke their plighted troth,
And had their King betray’d ;
True to his word he still remain’d,
His fame and honour still retain’d
Unstained by treachery.

Macdonald, thine's a glorious name !
Great thy renown and warlike fame,
But nobler glories dost thou claim
 For honour and fidelity.
When thy Imperial Master fell,
No power could thy devotion quell,
Till he, himself, had sign'd the deed
Which thee from thy allegiance freed ;
And, now, since thou hast sworn to serve
Thy King, no power can make thee swerve,
 Or from thy duty bend ;
Although thou still sincerely lovest,
But yet the conduct disapprovest,
 Of thy ambitious friend.

X.

Unused such candid words to hear,
King Louis heard with startled ear ;
 Nor could he understand,
How honour and fidelity
Should sway a man so powerfully :
Devotion was a thing which he
 Could little comprehend.
Yet, half o'erawed, he answer made,
And half displeased, the Monarch said,—
 Assuming an indifferent tone,—
“ Do as thou wilt ;—it matters not ;—
Enough of leaders we have got
 Whose talents more than mate thine own.

And who, perchance, in danger's hour,
More willingly will use their power,
To drive from out their native land,
That rebel chief, and lawless band.”
Then with a calm and scornful look,
'Neath which the gilded courtiers shook,
Macdonald left the hall of state,
And quickly reach'd the palace gate—
Sprang lightly on his gallant steed,
And from the palace rode with speed,
To seek amid retirement's charms,—
Removed afar from war's alarms,—
That lucid peace, that placid rest,
Which calms the mind, and soothes the breast,
Unbroken by the whirling boils
Of angry faction's fierce turmoils.

XI.

Fear and confusion fill'd the court ;
The Monarch's glee, and courtiers' sport
 To gloomier thoughts gave way.
The news throughout the city spread,
Paris soon heard the tale of dread,
 And trembled with dismay :
And since Macdonald had retired,
One anxious hour had scarce expired,

When Marshal Soult was usher'd in,
And dauntless Ney, and Count Bourinne,
Who to the King an offer made,
Against the tyrant's cause to aid.
"The madman !" Marshal Soult exclaim'd, —
Is his ambition still untam'd,
That thus again in his caprice,
He breaks the bonds of Europe's peace ?"
The King embolden'd said,—
"Let him an outlaw be declared,
With all who have his treason shared,
Or shall his progress aid ;
And set a price upon his head,
To take him, or alive or dead !"

XII.

That night the King and councillors sate
Discussing plans until 'twas late ;
At length by all it was agreed
That Marshal Ney the troops should lead ;
And Soult, perchance, 'twas well for thee,
They doubted thy fidelity,
Or thou, like Ney, hadst earn'd the doom,
By which he fills a traitor's tomb !
His fate I mourn, and yet I must
Confess, although severe, 'twas just.
When Ney received into his hand
The *signa* of his high command,

He thus address'd the King,—
“I'll tame that haughty tyrant's rage,
And soon within an iron cage
The rebel I shall bring!”

XIII.

Bright, in its full meridian rays,
The sun shines on the Tuileries,
But silent are its halls :
The King has fled, the courtiers gone ;
The gleam upon the palace thrown,
More vacant shows the walls.
But see you, on Montmartre's height
Behold yon gay and glittering sight ;
See yonder proud and martial throng
With waving banners march along ;
The ray which on their armour gleams,
Is mirror'd in ten thousand beams.
And, hark ! amid that serried throng,
There swells the burthen of a song !
And as the chorus flows around,
Each warrior's bosom seems to bound :—

XIV.

“ Where the Seine rushes fleetly, a violet sweetly,
In freshness and beauty late blossom'd so fair ;
But a hurricane flew o'er the violet blue,
And winter's cold breath nipp'd its beauties so rare ”

“ But spring is returning to cheer nature’s mourning—
The earth with fresh beauties shall soon bloom again ;
And soon shall that flower, in garden and bower,
Display all its charms on the banks of the Seine.
Then sing to the violet so blue ;
’Tis the pledge of the heart that is faithful and true ! ”

Thus with one universal shout,
They rung their joyous ditty out ;
And as the mystic chorus ceas’d,
Each placed a violet on his breast.

XV.

Ney, who was in the army’s rear,
The soldiers’ boisterous stave did hear,
And mark’d the joy with which they set
Upon their breasts the violet ;
But whether he not understood
The meaning of their merry mood,
Or that he wished not to destroy
The source of their ambiguous joy,
He heeded not—at least he seem’d
As if their joy he harmless deem’d.
With mirth uncheck’d they onward went,
Their merry bosoms vigour lent
Unto their limbs, as swiftly they
With hasty march pursued their way.

XVI.

Here now we leave them to pursue
Their course, while we our tale renew,
 And change awhile the scene.
That sun which o'er Montmartre's height
Shone all so cloudless and so bright,
At Lyons show'd as fair a sight,
 And beam'd with equal sheen :
With floating banners broad and fair,
With shouts that echoed through the air,
 And cannon's thund'ring peal,
Napoleon, with his troops elate,
Emerged out of the city gate,
 All bright with shining steel ;
And, swiftly forming on the plain,
Stood ready to advance again.
Prepared they stood—nor paused they long,
For soon amid that serried throng,
From rank to rank the Chieftain rode,
And on his veterans bestow'd
The praise he knew was ever dear,
And never lost on soldier's ear.
He gave the word :—" Ye sons of France !
Ye gallant warriors, advance !
Away, away ! vainly our foes
May try our progress to oppose ;
Howe'er so numerous they be,
They cannot change our destiny ;

And Fate commands us to advance :
Forward ! and let our banners dance
 Triumphant on the breeze !
Long live the Army ! long live France !
 Whose fame fills earth and seas."

XVII.

The soldiers with a shout replied,
And swept along in martial pride ;
And in the van of that array,
Napoleon on his charger grey,
Rode by the side of Count Mourand,
Who did the foremost rank command.
 Swiftly they march'd o'er plain and hill,
 Swiftly they march'd all day :
The sun was sinking fast, yet still
 They sped upon their way.
Onward they went, nor paused until,
 Mid evening's gathering grey,
They reach'd Maçon ; and halted there
Till in the east, with fiery glare,
The morning sun, with visage red,
His light on the horizon shed ;
And as on each surrounding height
His rising beams fell fair and bright,
The trumpet from its brazen throat
Sent loudly forth its gathering note ;

And ere its echoing cadence died,
That serried host, in martial pride,
In columns, rank, and dense array,
Were swiftly marching on their way.
Away, away, they swiftly went ;
On, onward, sped that armament.

XVIII.

That sun who, while his rays of gold
The ruddy morning did unfold,
Beheld them leave Maçon ;
As his last lingering beams of light,
Were waning on the western height,
Saw them approach Chalons.
Again they halted for the night,
And with the first faint streak of light,
Again their onward march renew'd,
And speedily their course pursued :
Thus daily, with increasing throng,
Napolcon led his host along.

XIX.

The western sun beam'd bright and fair
With level rays upon Auxerre,
When Bonaparte, in anxious mood,
Upon its northern ramparts stood :
The sunbeams which so sweetly play'd
On the surrounding vine-clad glade

He heeded not ; the perfumed air,
The azure sky, so bright and fair,
Own'd not his thoughts, nor from his eye
Could claim one glance of sympathy.
Silent and still, with look intent,
He stood upon the battlement ;
And mark'd the sun's declining blaze,
Reflected in ten thousand rays,

From Marshal Ney's approaching corps,
And saw the Bourbon banners wave
Above the bravest of the brave.

“ And is he, then, so mean a slave
As serve a Monarch he abhors !”

Thus to himself Napoleon said,
In accents which his fear betray'd.
Silent he watch'd them for a space,
With anxious eye and ashy face ;
Then to Mourand, who linger'd near,
He cried, with mingled grief and fear,-
“ Haste, send to me my fleetest steed,
For I must forward ride with speed,
To meet yon army on the plain,
And try to win it back again ;
For 'gainst such odds our power were vain.”

XX.

His steed was brought the Chief, and straight,
Swift issuing from the city gate,

With slender escort on he went,
To meet that mighty armament ;
 To which, as he drew near,
He paused, and, springing to the ground,
Cast a keen, hurried glance around,
 And not unmix'd with fear.
Then took his hat from off his head,
And with a slow and steady tread
 Walk'd on amid that host—
Who shrunk with looks of silent awe
As thus their fallen Chief they saw,
Whose word so late was Europe's law,
 Which woe to him who crost !
Napoleon of their leader-chief
Claim'd instant speech and audience brief ;
And, prompt the summons to obey,
He soon was met by Marshal Ney :
And there, those chiefs renown'd afar
For glorious deeds perform'd in war,
And who, by friendship's sacred tie,
Had sworn by each to live or die,
 Before each other stood.
They met,—but not as those who meet
Impatient each his friend to greet
 In most affective mood.
They met,—but neither offer'd bland
To clasp in friendly grasp the hand.

They met,—but met as foemen now,
With cold constraint and haughty brow ;
While each might in the other's eye
Read caution, doubt, uncertainty,
And strove beneath a look of pride
The feelings of his heart to hide.

XXI.

Ney was the first who silence broke,
And thus in words ambiguous spoke :—
“ What wants Napoleon, that he
An audience should demand of me ?—
Dost thou not know, that to the King,
I've pledged myself, that I should bring
Thee prisoner in an iron cage,
A subject for the rabble's rage ?
And know'st thou not, alive or dead,
A price is set upon thy head ?
What say'st thou, that I do not make
My soldiers thee a prisoner take,
And instant bear thee to thy foes,
To glut their vengeance with thy woes ? ”
He ceased, and with his closing word,
A murmur from the troops was heard—
Who look'd into each other's face,
And mutter'd something of disgrace
That should upon their 'scutcheons fall
If they forsook the “ Corporal.”

XXII.

Napoleon mark'd the soldiers' mood,
And well their murmur understood :
Embolden'd in his daring plan,
To Marshal Ney he thus began :—
“ And can it be, that in mine ear,
Such words from Marshal Ney I hear ?
Can he who in my proudest hour
Shared glory, honour, wealth, and power,
Now turn against me, and take part
With those who fain would pierce my heart ?
Doth no remembrance now remain
Of friendship plight on battle plain ?
Think, think on Russia's dread campaign !
Has Moskowa's Prince* forgotten now
The mutual dangers which we shared,
When side by side, mid Russia's snow,
The Cossack and the Russ we dared ? ”
He then the soldiers thus address'd,
In words which thrill'd each warrior's breast :—

XXIII.

“ And you, ye heroes so renown'd !
Shall it be ever said ye drown'd
The glories of a Frenchman's name,
By fighting for a Bourbon's claim ;

* This title was conferred on Ney for his ability and courage in the battle of that name.

While he who had your Leader been
In many a glorious battle scene,
And ever led you in the path
Of honour and of fame,
Ye sacrificed to glut the wrath
Of his insatiate foe, who hath
Oft trembled at his name ?
Soldiers, think on the deeds of might
Ye have perform'd in glorious fight !
Think, think on Lodi's bloody pass,
And Aracoli's dread morass !
Remember ye Marengo's fight,
Where victory shone upon your might !
Think on the sun that rose on high
In Austerlitz's morning sky,
And signall'd you to victory !
Of Jena, and of Wagram, too,
Where our triumphant Eagles flew !
Remember these and hundreds more,
Whose names 'twere needless to count o'er ;
And as ye think on glories won,
Think, too, of him who led you on ;
He, who in every battle-field
Compell'd your foes to fly or yield,
Till treachery stole away his shield !*

* Napoleon always assigned treachery as the cause of his reverses ;
but unfortunately has omitted to furnish the proofs of it.

XXIV.

“And as your minds recall again
Each glorious scene on battle-plain,
Can ye allow that he who led
Your gallant hearts in glory’s tread,
Should fall, forsaken and alone,
And with his blood to bind the throne,
Of that presumptuous, worthless thing,
Whom others have declared your king !
Was it for this the chains ye broke,—
Was it for this ye burst the yoke,

’Neath which your fathers groan’d ?
Was it for this ye fought and bled,
Till Europe shook beneath your tread,
And humbled kings, with tremblings dread,

Your rights and statutes own’d ?”
He ceased,—and from the army rose
A murmur of suppress’d applause,
Which first was indistinct and low,
Then louder, and more loud did grow,
Till with the rending thunder’s roar,
Whose echoes peal from shore to shore,
From thrice ten thousand hearts burst out
A loud and universal shout.

XXV.

An instant, in bewilder’d mood,
Ney, gazing on Napoleon stood,
And, trembling with emotion, view’d

The soldiers round the Emperor crowd,
And when upon his ear
Burst forth their acclamation loud,
And proud triumphant cheer,
Like clouds which flit athwart the sky,
In April tide, when winds ride high,
And, drifting on, successive throw
A varied shade on earth below—
So, at that loud acclaim,
Over the Prince of Moskowa's face
Dark shadows did each other chase ;
His colour went and came ;
The quivering of his lip confess'd
The tumult raging in his breast.

XXVI.

And will he then a traitor prove ?
Alas ! forgive him, for his love
For his great Chief alone could turn
His heart from faith to Louis sworn.
He look'd around with frantic eye,
He saw his soldiers from him fly ;
And as their shout rose in the air,
He ceased to strive against despair ;
And his baton of high command,—
The king had given with his own hand,—
Upon the ground he toss'd,
And shouted—"Soldiers, let us flee

To join the man whom destiny
Determines that our Prince shall be,—
 The Bourbon's cause is lost !”
This said, the Marshal forward sprung,
His arms around Napoleon flung,
And with impassion'd ardour press'd
The Emperor to his beating breast.

XXVII.

With shouts far louder than before,
'Mid rolling drum and cannon's roar,
 The troops an answer gave,—
“Long live the Great Napoleon !
Whose glorious deeds in battle done,
Raised him to sit upon a throne !
And long live Ney, who well hath won
 The name of bravest of the brave !”
And as that shout rang in the air,
The crowded ramparts of Auxerre,
 Return'd their loud acclaim ;
While swiftly on with Marshal Ney,
Napoleon rode triumphantly ;
 And fast behind them came,
In all the joy and martial pride
Which warriors feel who know their guide
 Will lead them on to fame,
That host, which had been sent to bring
That guide a prisoner to their king !

Amidst a welcome loud and long,
Enter'd Auxerre with shout and song.

XXVIII.

That night that army feasted high,
Midst wassail, rout, and revelry;
Shouts, music, noise of every kind,
In one unceasing roar combin'd,
 Ascended from Auxerre;
While, midst the dark clouds of the night,
The town cast forth a lurid light,
And all, with flaming bonfires bright,
 Gleam'd with a fiery glare.
At length with toil and wine o'ercome,
Hush'd was each boisterous shout and hum,
And still'd was trumpet-horn and drum,
 And all reposed in peace:
But short their rest, for soon the Chief
Aroused them from their slumber brief;
 And as the ruddy glow
Of morning's beam began to rise
Upon the verge of eastern skies,
 They enter'd Fontainebleau.

XXIX.

Fair town, thou saw'st a wondrous sight,
When, with the dawn of morning light,
Like hero from victorious fight,
Napoleon led his banded might

Within thy royal walls.
Yet thou full many a change hast seen,
And many a sight of woe has been
 Within thy noble halls :
Thou 'st seen a Chief, sublime and great,
Fall 'neath the rage of foemen's hate,
Which years of pride, oppression, wrong,
Had gather'd up, and cherish'd long—
Hurl'd headlong from his towering throne,
And left forsaken and alone,
With scarce a friend his heart to cheer,
Amid despondency and fear !
That daring Chief thou seest again,
Surrounded by a warlike train,
Mighty as when in proudest hour
Wide Europe trembled at his power ;
And full of hope as when he first
Forth midst his country's chaos burst,
And tamed it to his haughty will,
And launched his thunders forth until
Surrounding nations cringed in awe,
And bow'd beneath his iron law !

XXX.

They stay'd not long ; ere middle day,
Far Fontainbleau behind them lay :
The waving forests soon they pass'd,
O'er hill and plain they sped full fast,

But long before the foremost's eye
The heights of Paris could descry,
The sun had quench'd his beams of light
Amid a damp and misty night :
At length appear'd a lurid glare
Reflected in the humid air ;
 And looking from a height,
Paris before them far and wide,
Lay spread around on either side,
 Illumin'd all and bright.

XXXI.

The thousand lights which distant glow'd
The outline of the city show'd,
 Dim, dark, and undefin'd—
Save when the dense and humid cloud,
Which hung above it like a shroud,
 Was lifted by the wind.
Then burst at once upon their view,
A scene which thrill'd each bosom through,
 And well it might I ween,
For, by the city's glaring light,
Waving on spire and turret's height,
Dim through the floating clouds of night,
 The *Tri-color* was seen !
That sight their flagging spirits fired,
Fresh strength and energy inspir'd,
 And swiftlier on they flew—
Like they who in the closing race

Struggle to win the foremost place,
And see the goal in view.
The foremost ranks the barrier pass'd,
And, as the illumined city cast
Its glare upon the mighty throng,
Which fill'd the streets, and seem'd to make
The very ground beneath them shake,
As shout on shout successive brake,
Napoleon led his host along ;
And look'd with pride upon the sight,
Where, almost yelling with delight,
Thousands on thousands round him press'd,
And in their frantic joy caress'd
His very steed, to which they clung,
And on each side embracing hung,
As in the front of that array
The Emperor slowly led the way,
Until he gained the Tuileries,
And vanish'd from their eager gaze.

XXXII.

Not in the zenith of her mighty power,—
Not in her loftiest and proudest hour,
When her immortal sons triumphant came
Victorious from the field, and crown'd with fame—
Nor when in triumph through her streets were led,
With wreath of victory around his head,
While, as a trophy of the battle plain,
Perchance a captive monarch graced his train—

Did conqueror claim, or haughty Rome
Decree to welcome victor home,
A triumph such as now was shown
By Paris to Napoleon.
The young, the old, the rich, the poor,
The noble, and the rustic boor,
Mingling in one promiscuous throng,
Forgot the difference of their state,
The Chief's return to celebrate,
And join'd in shout, huzzah, and song.

XXXIII.

Amidst a crowd of lesser name,
To the Imperial Monarch came,
Fouché, with false and cunning heart,
Full of chicane, deceit, and art,
And offer to Napoleon made
His councils and his cause to aid—
Nor was his offer vain ;
Napoleon hail'd him with applause,
Rejoic'd that to assist his cause
Such aid he should regain :
And though he knew that deeper knave,
And falser traitor, baser slave,
Could scarce be found in any land—
Unless 'twere that apostate priest—
That infidel, from vows released,
The arch-betrayer, Talleyrand—

All this he knew : 'twas but, indeed,
For this that he of him had need—
Tyrants have ever found that knaves
And villains are their fittest slaves.
Napoleon, trust not to his troth—
Believe not thou that traitor's oath ;
If thou, usurper, in thy rule,
Must have a villain for thy tool,
Beware he does not thee befool !

XXXIV.

Once more, upon the Gallie throne,
Behold the great Napoleon !
 And hardly need I say,
That to the imperial standard came
Full many a chief of warlike name,
And youths who sought to share the fame
 Of veterans in glory grey.
Nor boots it that I pause to tell
The scenes—perchance you know them well—
Of dazzling pomp and pageantry,
Of *fête*, review, and revelry ;—
Scenes which, alas ! too often hide,
Beneath their hollow show and pride,
The throes of many a throbbing breast,
By anguish torn, or grief distress'd,
And disappointment ill conceal'd,
Or bitter envy half reveal'd.

These pass we by ; and pass we too
The pageant of the Champ-de-Mai,
Where thousand upon thousand flew
To swear allegiance to the law,
By which Napoleon deem'd again
To bind the people to his reign.

XXXV.

Three moons had wax'd and waned away
In quick succession since the day
That the usurper came,
And seized the sceptre and the crown
The king in terror had thrown down,
And fled before his name ;
And having sent his summons forth,
From west to east, from south to north,
To rouse his subjects to defend
From gathering foes their native land,
All over France, from side to side,
Through length and breadth, both far and wide,
No sound was heard but armour's jar,
No word was breath'd, but " Arm for war !"

XXXVI.

Like spirits 'neath a wizard's wand,
An army rose at his command,
And hasten'd on, without delay,
To meet in one immense array.

The labouring peasant heard the sound,
And left his ploughshare in the ground,
Seizing within his rustic hand
The soldier's musketoon and brand;
The shepherd on the distant hill
Was startled by the war-cry shrill,
Dash'd to the ground his harmless crook,
His mute and fleecy flocks forsook,
And weary of his peaceful life,
Went forth to mix in deadly strife.

XXXVII.

Near Avesnes was the centre where
The troops were ordered to repair,
And hastily to concentrate,
And there the Chieftain's orders wait:
Nor stay'd the Warrior-Monarch long,
For soon amidst the gathering throng,
Arranging, planning, drilling, he
Toiled day and night incessantly,
Instructing the unskilful hand
To use the bayonet and brand,
To point the gun, to rule the steed,
And mixing mid his vet'ran host
Those who had never weapon crost,
Nor seen a foe in battle bleed.
Joy beam'd within Napoleon's eye,
His bosom swell'd, his heart beat high,

As he beheld his standard wave
Above thrie sixty thousand brave
And gallant sons of France,
Whose bosoms burn'd to prove their might
Against their enemies in fight,
And long'd to see their banners bright
Amid the battle dance.

XXXVIII.

'Twas on the anniversary
Of Friedland and Marengo's day,
Napoleon, with his army vast,
Over the Belgiae frontier pass'd ;
And having order'd Marshal Ney,
With fifty thousand warriors bold,
On Quatre Bras, by break of day,
To speed along without delay,
While he should with his own array
His march on Fleurus hold,
Swiftly along the Sambre's banks
Napoleon led his serried ranks,
And, heedless of the pouring rain,
Soon stood array'd on Ligny's plain :
Nor were the gallant Prussians slow
To meet their hated Gallie foe.

XXXIX.

Brave Blueher saw the Gallie host,
Led by the man he hated most,

With glancing eyes, whose glow express'd
The joy which fills a warrior's breast,
To meet a foe whom public wrong,
Or private wrath has sought for long.
He cares not for the mighty odds

Of his inveterate foes—

Vengeance each Prussian heart corrodes,
Which well their leader knows.

Woe, woe to thee Napoleon,

If thou should'st meet him in the fight!

The life's blood of his slaughtered son

He'll on thy head requite.

Go, chafe the lion in his wrath,

Or cross the hungry tiger's path,

But, if thou valuest life,

Shun thou the Prussian leader's hand,

Nor dare to cross his whetted brand,

Or every soldier in thy band

May rue the deadly strife.

XL.

“Charge! charge!” each leader gave the word,

And on both armies sped :

The foot rush'd on, the horsemen spurr'd,

The muskets rattled, cannon roar'd,

On column, file, and squadron pour'd,

With shouts and clangour dread!

Fierce was the onset, long the fight,

Wild was the conflict, fell the night,

And deadly was the fray.
Each host was with like rage inspired,
Each heart was with like courage fired,
Thousands of foes on foes expired,
But neither side gave way ;
And man to man each soldier fought,
And vain each watchful leader sought
By stratagem or art to throw
Confusion on his valiant foe :
Charge after charge was made in vain,
But vantage neither host could gain.

XLI.

Thus fiercely raged the battle fray,
Nor when had closed the bloody day
Did conflict aught assuage ;
But, 'mid the darkness of the night,
The battle-fires flash'd far and bright,
And still each foe rush'd to the fight
With undiminish'd rage ;
Until, by greater numbers foil'd,
The Prussian warriors recoil'd
Before the Gallic host.
In vain the gallant Blucher tried
To seize the palm by fate denied,
And vain each danger he defied
Ere he the battle lost.

The ground was cover'd o'er with slain,
Himself unhorsed, and nearly ta'en,
When slowly from the battle plain,
 Through Ligny he retired;
But not till many a gallant foe
Had felt the vengeance of his blow,
 And 'neath his hand expired.

XLII.

Ere Prussia's troops began to yield
One foot of the contested field,
While leading on his valiant band,
All suddenly approach'd Mourand
A foe of more than common height,
Who fought with all a giant's might:
Nearer, and still more near he came,
When, by the battle's glaring flame,
Mourand seem'd in the warrior's face
Some half-forgotten lines to trace,
Then, starting, cried—"On battle-plain
To meet thee long I've sought in vain,
De Barrot! but we've met at last—
And ere another hour has past
One of us two in mortal strife
Shall pay the forfeit with his life.
False villain! know I am Mourand:
I've sought thee over every land,

With purpose firm and heart unchanged,
Amongst the living and the dead;—
Soon now, upon his murderer's head,
My father's death shall be revenged!
And, Marian! if thou sitt'st on high,
Or shin'st a star in yonder sky,
And yet canst turn thy gentle eye
On this far-distant sphere,
Then, look once more upon Mourand,
And nerve for strife thy lover's hand,
For vengeance now is near!"

XLIII.

De Barrot, scowling, turn'd away—
"Back, back; I wish not thee to slay;
But do not chafe my mood,
Or thou may'st find, when 'tis too late,
Thou dost but rush upon thy fate;
Few ever roused De Barrot's hate
That not his vengeance rued."
"Thou add'st but fuel to my fire!"
Cried Mourand, with redoubled ire.
Then forward either warrior sprung,
Each to the earth his scabbard flung,
And, with one foot advanced,
Join'd fiercely in their deadly strife,
This for revenge, and that for life;
Their eyes with fury glanced.

Fast feint, and pass, and sword-stroke fell,
Which both knew how to parry well ;
And as they heated in the fight
Their blows fell with redoubled might.

XLIV.

Thus fought they on : Count Mourand's skill
Was used but for defence, until
His watchful eye observed at length
De Barrot fought with wasted strength ;
 And as his foe began to fail,
Count Mourand every sinew nerved,
With skill and power so well reserved,
 De Barrot to assail.
Already weary with the fight,
De Barrot shrunk before his might,
When suddenly a well-aim'd blow
From Mourand's sabre pierced his foe,
Who dropp'd his weapon from his hand,
And, reeling, sunk upon the sand,
Imploring imprecations dread
To fall upon his conqueror's head !

XLV.

With vengeance glancing in his eye,
The victor raised his sword on high,
And standing o'er his prostrate foe,
Prepared to strike the fatal blow ;

But just as his uplifted blade
Began to fall, his hand was stay'd,
For suddenly he seem'd to hear,
Resounding calmly in his ear,
His father's words in dying hour,—
“The life of direst foe ne'er take,
When he, nor can resistance make,
Disarm'd is in thy power ;—
For mercy is the brightest gem
That shines in victor's diadem.”

XLVI.

His prostrate foe beheld him pause,
But little knew he of the cause ;
And while Mourand in soften'd mood,
Unguarded for an instant stood,
He with a sudden, desperate bound,
Sprang like a serpent from the ground,
And threw his sinewy arms around
Count Mourand, with a firmer grasp
Than e'er was known in friendship's clasp.
So unprepared was Mourand,
So unexpected was the blow,
O'erpower'd he fell upon the sand,
Beneath his mortal foe !
Upon his fallen victim's breast
De Barrot's knee was firmly press'd ;
And with a dagger in his hand,
He tauntingly address'd Mourand :—

“ Did I not warn thee of thy fate,
If thou should'st rouse my soul to hate?
Thy blood the penalty shall be
Of thy presumptuous vanity !”

XLVII.

He ceased, and in Count Mourand's breast
His dagger soon had found a sheath :—
His hand the weapon firmer press'd,
And aim'd it at the heart beneath,
But ere his arm could strike the blow
Himself was stretch'd upon the ground,
And from his bosom gurgled slow
His life's blood through a ghastly wound :
For while he aim'd at Mourand's heart
A rifle-ball transpierced his own,
And, springing up with sudden start,
Gave one loud shriek in dying smart,
Then backward fell with parting groan !

XLVIII.

Unhurt, Mourand sprang from the ground,
And for a moment's space
Gazed on De Barrot's bubbling wound ;
And by the battle fires around
Which shone upon his face,
Beheld that still his features bore
The same fierce look of hate they wore,

When in their mortal strife,
Exulting o'er his prostrate foe,
He raised his hand to strike the blow
Design'd to take his life :
And as Count Mourand saw him lie
All blood begrimed, with death-shot eye,
He hurried from the horrid sight,
Into the thickest of the fight.

XLIX.

'Twas now that Prussia's host recoil'd,
By Gaul's superior numbers foil'd,
And foot by foot began to yield
The long contested battle-field.
But small the glory France may claim,
And Ligny's field is scant of fame ;
For though the Prussians did retreat,
'Twas not in tumult or defeat,
But slowly and unbroken they
Retiréd from the battle fray,
And like a lion held at bay,
Oft turn upon the foe,
And crush'd the foremost in their wrath,
Then leisurely resumed their path,
Stern, suddenly, and slow.

END OF CANTO THE THIRD.

Canto Fourth.

I.

O'ER Brussels' night dark clouds were flung,
And like a sombre curtain hung,

 On palace, park, and square :
In gorgeous hall, whose glaring light
And dazzling sheen o'erpower'd the sight

 With splendour rich and fair,
Britannia's gallant chivalry
 Tripp'd through the mazy dance,
While from each eye joy's ecstacy
 Beam'd forth in every glance ;
There, too, did England's daughters glide,
In maiden loveliness and pride,
Through whirling waltz and gallopade,
Through gay quadrille and promenade,
To music's deep, vibrating swell,
Whose mystic echoes rose and fell.

II.

Of such a noble scene as this,
Who can describe the loveliness?
There virgin charms and martial pride
Beauty and valour, side by side,
Swept through the hall; while every eye
Shone with delight and pleasure high,
And many a gallant hero strove
To win a smile from lady-love,
And many a gentle maiden's eye
Beam'd forth with all love's brilliancy,
And often with a glance express'd
The passion words had ne'er confess'd:—
To lover's heart, one silent glance
Oft speaks with deeper eloquence
Than language can convey;
And often will a touch, a sigh,
A look from half-averted eye,
The latent fire betray.
But do not deem those warriors bland
Unfit in battle-field to stand;
Those hands which now so softly clasp
The fingers of the fair,
In hour of need the sword can grasp,
And every danger dare;
Those eyes that now so brightly glow
With love's serene delight,
Have often look'd upon the foe
Defiance in the fight.

III.

Nor scorn'd great Wellington to share
The pleasure of a scene so fair ;
The youngest and the gayest there
 Was not more gay than he ;
Though well he knew, even at that hour,
The swift approach of him whose power
Had oft made humbled Europe cower,
 And hosts in terror flee ;
Nor was it that he wish'd to show
Contempt for his redoubted foe
 By false security ;
No, Wellesley's was the lion's mood,
That couchant lies in lair or wood,
 Watching with half-clos'd eyes,
Each stealthy step and movement made
By those who his domains invade,
Who think, perchance, as on they creep,
To seize upon him in his sleep,
 Or take him by surprise ;
Not deeming that in such an hour
Most fearful is his mighty power.
Thus Wellington would oft impose
Upon his less prudential foes,
Who hoped with overwhelming might,
To crush him ere prepared for fight,
Ne'er thinking that he only stay'd
For this to draw his ready blade,

And lur'd them on to the attack,
To turn the tide of battle back ;—
This Victor, Marmont, and Junôt,
Soult, and Massena well do know.

IV.

But who is he, all soil'd with clay,
And flush'd with haste, who suddenly
 Bursts in upon the scene,
Half blinded by the flood of light
Which gushes on his dazzled sight,
 And beauty's brilliant sheen ?
And as he glances round him, lo !
The dancers pause in mute surprise,
Gazing on him with wondering eyes ;
And ceases instantly the flow
Of music's deep, vibrating roll,
That thrill'd with ecstasy each soul.
His armour, mien, and martial frame,
A British warrior proclaim.

V.

“ Ha ! ” cried Lord Wellington, and led
The aide-de-camp aside, and said—
“ What tidings of the Gallic host ?
Has Bonaparte the frontier cross'd ? ”
Who answered thus—“ In mighty throng,
Full fifty thousand warriors strong,

The foe press on from Charleroi,
And gather fast on Quatre Bras.
Three times before the close of day,
With overwhelming numbers, they
Essayed to drive us from the wood ;
But still our gallant soldiers stood,
And gloriously maintain'd their post
Against an overpowering host ;
Till, foil'd and wearied with the fight,
The foe recoil'd in broken might,
And, baffled in each fierce attack,
At length were forced to yield,
Leaving our army to bivouac
Upon the well-won field."

VI.

Lord Wellington, in thoughtful mood,
In silence for a moment stood,
And muttered to himself the while,
With a half-pleased, half-scornful smile :—
" If I had, then, Fouché* believed,
How had I been betray'd !
But I was not to be deceiv'd,
By one who so often play'd
The traitor, that the gallows ne'er
Did falser villain's carcass bear.

* Fouché, that master in the art of deceit and lying, had promised to give Wellington intimation of Napoleon's movements; and, to "keep his promise to the ear and break it to the sense," he actually sent off the intelligence to him, but took care to have his own messenger stopped before he crossed the frontier.

Curse on his cunning ! lies and art
Arc life to his deecitful heart ;
But he shall find how little I
Did on his promises rely.”
Then to the aide-de-camp he said,
In tone which no surprise betray’d—
“ Your tidings brook not of delay,
 Then haste to Quatre Bras,
And to the gallant soldiers say,
 Of Belgium and Nassau,—
Our own brave men you scaree need tell,
They always do their duty well,—
That, if their Gallie foemen should
Attempt to force them from the wood,
They must their utmost efforts strain
Their ground till morning to maintain,
When we shall with our swiftest speed
Fresh reinforcements forward lead.”
“ Your Grace’s ’hest shall be obey’d,”
The aide-de-camp, retiring, said—
 Casting a half regretful eye
Upon the seene, so sweetly fair,
 As if he left reluctantly,
And fain one hour had linger’d there,
Its joys and happiness to share,
Ere he, mid darkness, storm, and rain,
Went forth to Quatre Bras again ;
Then, bounding on his ready steed,
Rode swiftly on with willing speed.

VII.

Round Wellington with eager ear,
All throng'd the sudden news to hear ;
The half unfinish'd dance was stopp'd,
The rising peal of music dropp'd,
 And every voice was hush'd ;
In expectation of the tale,
Full many a lovely check grew pale,
 So late with beauty flush'd :
But calmly smiling, as if nought
Of high importance had been brought,
The Duke, half eliding, half in jest,
His anxious auditors address'd—
“ On with the dance—let music flow !
No thought of care to-night we'll know !
What ! shall report of distant foe
One moment's merriment destroy,
Or cast a cloud upon our joy ?
 No ! were Napoleon's power,
Even now, in all its martial might,
Within a league, prepared for fight,
Of such a lovely scene as this
It should not check the happiness,
 Or shorten ev'n an hour ! ”

VIII.

Once more, in high, melodious strain,
The music, pealing, swells again ;

And swiftly through the hall once more
The dancers lightly tread the floor,
Till hours, unmark'd, successive fly,
And midnight goes unheeded by.
But, hark ! a different sound they hear—
The trump of war breaks on their ear,
And, mixing with the rolling drum,
Rises the army's gathering hum.
They fly to arms, and quickly all
Have vanish'd from that brilliant hall ;—
All but a gentle maiden fair,
The daughter of the proud Delaware,
Who to her noble lover clings,
Who tries to soothe her sufferings.

IX.

Why doth the gallant Walter stay ?
 Why doth he loiter now ?
He who was aye in battle fray
 The first to meet the foe.
And why so silent doth he stand,
Pressing that lovely maiden's hand ?
And why doth she, with glistening eye
And pallid cheek, so earnestly
Gaze on young Walter's face, as if
Her heart would burst with speechless grief ;
While in her features is express'd
The burning anguish of her breast ?

Oh ! who such love as theirs can tell !
Opposed and slighted, Walter Græme
Had cherished long a stronger flame
Than e'en her father's scorn could quell ;
While, though submissive to her sire,
Not less unquenchable the fire
With which her noble bosom burn'd,
And Fanny of Delware returned.

X.

At length the lady silence broke,
And thus in faltering accents spoke :—
“ Walter, farewell ! since thou must go
To brave the vengeance of the foe,
And we awhile must sever,—
O God ! it almost breaks my heart
From thee, my Walter, thus to part—
To part perchance for ever !—
Go, then ! and if, in battle-field,
Thou shouldst my father see,
Say, say wilt thou his bosom shield
From the cruel enemy ?
And though he did thine honour spurn,
And pour'd on thee his haughty scorn,
Yet—as thou lov'st me—in the strife,
O wilt thou try to save his life ;
And in the hour of danger prove
How much he wrong'd thy noble love ?
And by Heaven's majesty,

While my blood flows—with my last breath—
In joy and woe—through life and death,
 I'll prove my love to thee !”
Thus spoke the daughter of Delaware,
While round her neck and shoulders fair,
 Her flowing ringlets hung ;
And in her brilliant, dark blue eye
Shone resolution firm and high,
 And passion deep and strong.

XI.

Sir Walter stood like one entranced,
While in his burning, dark eyes glanced
A beam of joy, and pleasure bright,
And inexpressible delight :
Then with emotion uncontroll'd,
 His dear one in his arms he press'd ;
Their beating hearts responsive told
 The love that burn'd within each breast.
“ Fanny, the charge that thou hast given
Is sacred to my heart as heaven ;
 And if on battle plain,
I should thy noble father see,
Surrounded by the enemy,
 And all his followers slain,
And fail in danger's darkest hour
To save him from the foemen's power,
Or with him fall not on the field
Where he disdains to turn or yield,

Mayst thou despise and scorn each name
That minds thee of thy Walter Græme !
But if it should my fortune be
To shield him from the enemy,
Say, wilt thou then consent to crown
My soul with ecstasy divine,
And wilt thou, dearest, join in one,
Thy Walter's humble fate and thine ?”

XII.

He paused,—and as she raised her head
A crimson blush her face o'erspread,
And in her glowing deep blue eye,
That beam'd with all love's brilliancy,
Her soul in soundless eloquence,
A language breathed in every glance,
And, stronger far than words, express'd
The love that fill'd her faithful breast.
But hark ! the trumpet's brazen throat
Again sends forth its gathering note,
More urgent than before ;
And calls each warrior to his post,
Amid that congregating host,
Each leader to his corps.
“ Fanny !” Sir Walter starting said—
“ That trumpet's call must be obey'd.
Farewell ! we for a time must part ;
But let not grief o'erpower thy heart,
Nor woe thy bosom pain ;—

Come, let me kiss away these tears,
And calm thy gentle spirit's fears,
We soon shall meet again :—
Think of the joy with which you'll see
Your Walter when the battle's o'er,
Returning crown'd with victory,
Your father reconciled, and we
United, and to part no more ! ”

XIII.

Again within his arms he press'd
His darling Fanny to his breast,
Who, timid half, with blushing face,
Return'd her lover's pure embrace ;
And gazed into each other's eyes,
Until in love's magnetic ties,
Their burning lips together elung
In one long, lasting kiss, and hung
Upon each other's sweetness there,
As if their mingling spirits ne'er,
Henceforward, could exist apart,
And had one life, one soul, one heart :
Yet part at length they must ;—
When duty calls them to the field,
Love, friendship, every tie must yield,
In those who bear upon their shield
Their country's hope and trust.
At length released from Fanny's clasp,
Sir Walter Græme relax'd his grasp ;

Then with conflicting feelings, he
Rush'd out in speechless agony ;—
And blame him not, nor deem him weak,
If ev'n a tear roll'd down his cheek ;
For who is he who can behold
With feelings stern and bosom cold,
The tears in lovely woman's eye,
Or mark her spotless bosom's sigh ?
And in such time from maid beloved,
Or friend that 's dear, can part unmoved ?

XIV.

The lady, mute and motionless,
Stood like an image of distress :—
Her bosom heaved, wild throbb'd her heart,
Her bloodless lips were raised apart,
 As if she strove to speak ;
And swift as clouds in April, flew
Variéd shades of changing hue,
 Successive o'er her cheek ;
She moved not, but her burning eyes,
Her pallid face, and choking sighs,
Confess'd the agonizing smart
That swell'd within her gentle heart,
Until less swiftly rush'd her blood,
And calm, though pale, at length she stood ;
And leaning 'gainst the tapestried wall,
With mournful glance around the hall,

She sighing said, "And he is gone!
And I, alas, am here alone!
O God! with thy protecting power,
His bosom shield in danger's hour!"
Then with a faltering step and slow,
Her chamber lone she sought;
But rest her sad heart could not know—
Sleep ever shuns the eye of woe,
And mocks misfortune's lot.

XV.

Away Sir Walter bounds, the street
Reverberates 'neath his charger's feet,
As swift, and proudly, on it flies,
With tossing head and fiery eyes,
With champing bit, and nostrils wide,
And hoofs that spurn the ground in pride:
Nor did Sir Walter check the speed
Of his impetuous, noble steed,
Till in the foremost rank he stood,
Where, with a shout of loud acclaim,
The soldiers hail'd Sir Walter Græme,
But little did they know the flame
That rag'd within his blood!

XVI.

The British army gather'd fast,
And swiftly on the vanguard pass'd,

By Picton led, and Walter Græme,
And Brunswiek's chieftain bold;
And gallant Hill—of glorious fame—
And Ponsonby—whose dreaded name
Had often made his foes grow tame,
And Gallia's blood run cold.
Forward they swiftly march'd along;
And foremost in that martial throng,
Fair Scotia's tartan'd sons were seen;
Each mountain had its children sent,
Each chieftain had his clansmen lent,
And haughty tribes were there enblent,
Who long and oft had rivals been;
And lowland rage and Highland pride
Forgotten were or thrown aside:—
Nor was green Erin slow,
In danger's hour her sons to send,
With daring heart and ready hand
Against the common foe.
Onward they went, and great their need
To hasten on with all their speed,
For ere the gory plain they saw
Which skirts the roads of Quatre Bras,
'Twas cover'd with the dead;
For since the dawn of early day,
With fifty thousand warriors, Ney
Charge after charge had led,
And, chafed to find each onset vain,
With greater fury charged again.

XVII.

When the unequal fight began
There scarcely were twelve thousand men
 In all the British host ;
And 'gainst such mighty odds had they
Maintain'd their ground throughout the day,
And back again on furious Ney
 His shatter'd legions toss'd ;
And now, with half their number slain,
The sanguinary strife sustain
 Both dauntlessly and well ;
And still, though wearied with the fight,
Repell'd their Gallic foemen's might ;
 And as the foremost fell,
Upon the ground where he had stood,
The next, with ardent hardihood,
 Which nought could check or quell,
Sprang forward and defied the blows,
And stemm'd the torrent of his foes.

XVIII.

With various fortune, thus the strife
Raged in the wood with carnage rife,
 Until the summer sun
Hung midway 'tween meridian height
And earth's west verge, with clouded light,
And gloomily look'd on the fight
 Through vapours dark and dun ;

The British, weaken'd with their slain,
Their ground, at length, could scarce maintain,
And soon before the incessant flow
Of rushing squadrons of their foe,
Had either been compell'd to yield
Or die upon the battle-field;—

But succour was at hand,
For Picton, Brunswick, Pack, and Græme,
Cook, Alten, Kempt, of glorious name,
With reinforcements forward came

In many a gallant band;
Who, all resistless in their course,
Dash'd onward with the whirlwind's force,—
And vainly did their foes essay
To stop their sanguinary way;
For broken, overturn'd, and foil'd,
Before their arms the French recoil'd,

And down a deep ravine,
Which skirted Boise-de-Boise's wood,
Horses and men besmear'd with blood,

Promiscuously were seen,
Rolling in mingled ruin back
From their impetuous attack.
On either side fresh troops rush'd in,
Louder and louder swell'd the din,
And fiercer still the battle raged
As greater numbers were engaged.

XIX.

Thus stood the fight when Wellesley's eye
Beheld the Belgiac soldiers fly
Before their enemies in fear,
Like startled herd of mountain deer,
And keenly by the French pursued—
Who for an instant gain'd the wood—
“Advance!” he cried, “on, Picton, on!
Seest thou the Belgians have flown?
Forward! and clear the wood again!
And thou who, for thy father slain,
Hast sworn thy Gallic foes shall feel
The whetted edge of Brunswick's steel,
Let thy impatient soldiers go;
Charge, Brunswick! charge upon the foe!”
On Picton rush'd—on Brunswick flew—
And on went gallant Maitland, who
Ne'er shrunk to meet, in battle hour,
The fiercest rage of foemen's power:—
Onward they roll'd in stern array—
And dread the carnage, wild the fray;
For, shelter'd by the wood, the foe
Sent forth a keen, incessant flow
Of cannon, grape, and musketry;
Ditch, hedge, and brake, each bush and tree,
Conceal'd a Gallic enemy,
Whence, with unerring aim,
They pour'd a fiery, iron shower,

On the advancing British power,
Which thinn'd them as they came.
On, onward still—the combat swells ;
Shouts, groans, and cheers, and dying yells,
Are heard on every side.
Again the French are forced to yield
The keen contested battle-field ;
Again, before the British host,
They fly like foam by tempest toss'd
From ocean's raging tide.

XX.

With glowing ardour in his breast,
The royal Brunswick forward press'd,
And, as mid thousands of the Gaul
He led his gallant troops, a ball
Transpierced his noble heart ;
And while he cheer'd his followers on,
He reeling fell, without a groan
To tell his dying smart.
One moment, overpower'd with grief,
His soldiers gaz'd upon their Chief,
Then turning, rais'd a yell,
Long, loud, and dread, as that which broke
From Pandemonium's halls of smoke,
When 'neath the Great Eternal's stroke
The Prince of Darkness fell !
And as their yell of vengeance rose,
They rush'd amid their startled foes,

And shouting with revengeful rage,
In foemen's blood sought to assuage
The hate that burn'd in every soul,
And fury that defied control.

XXI.

On press'd the British in their course,
And still the French in broken force
Roll'd backward in defeat ;
And swiftly from the battle-plain
Ney led his foil'd, disorder'd train—
Nor dared he to attempt again
The British charge to meet,
Though twice the number still he had
Of those before whose power he fled ;
Nor paused he in his hasty flight,
Till, favour'd by the clouds of night,
His shatter'd army reached Frasnés,
And chafed by the disastrous day ;
While, weary with the fight,
The British troops reposed upon
The field they had so nobly won,
And where with brilliant splendour shone
The terrors of their might ;
And amid slaughter, blood, and rain,
Bivouac'd upon the battle-plain,
Where, side by side, upon the field,
The lifeless did the living shield

From the careering storms that flew,
And eddyng winds which wildly blew.

XXII.

The British Chief, 'by break of day,
Was mounted on his charger bay,
Which proudly pranc'd beneath its load,
As o'er the plain the Hero rode,
Forming his troops in line and square,
And bidding all for fight prepare ;
For on that ground 'twas his intent
To meet the Gallie armament
Which the Imperial Chieftain led.
But while from rank to rank he sped,
Inspiring all to deeds of fame,
A messenger from Bluecher came,
With tidings which his plans deranged,
And speedily his purpose changed,—
Who told him that before the foe
The Prussians were retiring slow,
Along the dark Dyle's muddy course,
Toward Wavre, in unbroken force,
And quickly meant to try again
Their fortune upon battle-plain.

XXIII.

When Wellington these tidings heard,
To halt he instant gave the word,

And far and wide the trumpet's clang
From corps to corps successive rang,—
While, as it echoed round,
The half unfurléd banners dropp'd—
Each squadron paused—each column stopp'd,
Obedient to the sound,
And with slow steps, reluctantly,
Began upon the broad *chaussée*,
Retiring to defile.
As from the field the soldiers turn'd,
Each heart with disappointment burn'd,
And sullen was a while,—
But soon their discipline o'ercame,
And duty cool'd their passion's flame,
And firmly, steadily, and slow,
In columns which defied the foe,
A dense, invulnerable mass,
They march'd through Genappe's narrow pass.
Nor unattack'd did they retire,
For oft, on their receding rear,
With many a sanguinary cheer,
Dash'd Lancer, Guard, and Cuirassier,
And pour'd into the British throng,
Which, closely mingled, march'd along,
A desultory fire :
But Uxbridge every charge repell'd,
And soon their fiery ardour quell'd,
And taught the Gaul to know

That vain are helmet and cuirass,
And greaves of steel, and plates of brass,
 When Britons give the blow,—
And how all vantageless and frail
Is ponderous coat of polish'd mail
 Against an English foe.

XXIV.

In serried columns, deep and strong,
The British army march along,
And undisturbed their way pursue
Toward the heights of Waterloo,
And, with the fast declining day,
Round Hougomont and Ter-la-Haye
 Began to gather fast ;
And there, in fields of trodden grain,
Unshelter'd from the pouring rain,
 And storms which o'er them pass'd,
They stretch'd themselves upon the ground,
While lightning flashes flew around,
And heaven's artillery shook the skies ;
And many a gallant heart who lies
 In slumber there, ere morning's break,
Shall sleep a sleep from which his eyes
 No call to arms shall ever wake.
O'ercome with toil, benumbed with cold,
Full many a warrior, young and bold,
 Long ere the dawn of day,

His soul had yielded 'mid the storm,
And on the earth his lifeless form
A stiffen'd carcass lay.

XXV.

Now, on La Belle Alliance's height,
Scarce seen amid the gathering night,
With what they deem'd success clate,
The Gaul began to concentrate ;
And as the sullen day expires,
They gather round their bivouac fires,
Which, through the dark and stormy night,
Gleam all along the crowded height ;
And, heedless of the tempest's noise,
In revelrous and tumult joys,
As round their wine-cup goes,
With many a long and bellowing shout,
Their boisterous merriment ring out,
Heard by their distant foes.
And hark ! amid the mingling hum,
The trumpet's sound, and rolling drum,
There rises from the Gallic throng
This wild and bacchanalian song:—

XXVI.

“ Comrades, pass around the bowl ;
Fill, fill your goblets up !
Let mirth ring loud as tempest's howl !
Quaff ! quaff the sparkling cup !

“ Fill, fill your wine cups to the brim,
And pledge with me this toast—
‘Triumph to us—success to him,
The Leader of our host!’

“ Drink, drink my comrades while you may;
The soldier’s heart is light;
The sword and battle-field by day,
And revelry by night!

“ The morrow’s dawn may battle bring,
And battle death or fame!
Then while we live let pleasure ring;
Life only is a name!

“ Then, comrades, pass around the bowl,
And fill your goblets up;
Let joy ring loud as tempest’s howl,
Quaff, quaff the brimming cup!”

While lightning flash’d, and pealing thunders rang,
This boisterous stave fierce Gallia’s soldiers sang.

XXVII.

Napoleon wrapp’d in his capôte,
Lay in his tent, but slumber’d not;
The anxious thoughts that fill’d his breast
Kept his perturbéd mind from rest;

And long in vain he tried to close
His weary eyelids in repose.
At length a fitful, troubled sleep
Did o'er his lulling senses creep ;
While on his agitated soul
Strange and terrific fancies stole.
He thought he stood upon a plain,
And saw his troops in thousands slain ;
And all, in wild confusion toss'd,
Tumultuous fly from battle lost ;
While midst the proud victorious focs
The murder'd D'Enghien's spirit rose,—
Exclaiming with exulting sneer,
“ Ha ! tyrant, now the hour is near,
In which upon thy head accurst,
The wrath of outraged heaven shall burst !
Remember thou the midnight cell
Where D'Enghien by assassins fell,—
And know that vengeance is at hand
On him who that foul murder plann'd ! ”
Then next amongst the victor host
Appeared Toussaint L'Ouverture's ghost,
And in derisive scorn,
Cried, “ Proud usurper, where is now
The crown with which so lately thou
Thy temples did adorn ?
Remember Saint Domingo's Chief,
Whom thou with falsehood lured to death !
Whose greatest fault was his belief

In despot's word and tyrant's breath :
A lingering, cruel death was mine,
Now see the doom that shall be thine !”

XXVIII.

The scene has changed : upon a rock,
Round which the foaming billows broke,
Chain'd by each limb, he thought he lay,
Unshelter'd from the scorching ray

The tropic sun upon him sent ;—
Beneath its fire his hot blood boil'd,—
His tongue was parch'd,—his flesh was broil'd,

But could not die though life seem'd spent !—
While o'er him with extended wing
A vulture grey was hovering,
With open beak, and eyes of flame,
And every moment nearer came,
Until at length its flutterings ceased,
And fix'd its talons in his breast !

And midst his agony and fear
A horrid laugh assail'd his ear ;
As if ten thousand fiends were there,
To mock his suff'rings and despair !
Napoleon gave a sudden scream,
And started from his hideous dream,—
While on his forehead damp and cold,
Large drops of perspiration roll'd.

Trembling he glanced around,
As if he deem'd his lamp's dim ray

Some scene of terror would display ;
But all had vanishéd away,
 And hush'd was every sound,—
Save when the bursting thunder broke,
And far its rolling echoes woke.

XXIX.

But while in revelry and joy
The French the passing hours employ,
Upon Saint Jean's opposing height
The British show'd a different sight :—
No sound of revelry was there—
No boisterous shouts rung through the air ;—
But all was still ; no voice was heard,
Save when the watchful sentry's word
Did to his anxious comrades tell,
As each hour pass'd, that all was well,
And, 'mid the howling of the blast,
Along the height full quickly pass'd ;
And while the livid lightnings shed
An awful splendour round their head,—
And rolling bursts of thunder sent
Their peals athwart the firmament,
 With dread-inspiring sound,
In solemn silence Britain's troops,
Around their bivouac fires in groups,
 Reclined upon the ground ;
And oft, while his companions stood
To shield him from the tempest rude,

Beside the watchfire bending low,
In calm, deliberate tone and slow,
Some veteran with solemn look
Read to his comrades from that book
Which tells that vain in battle hour
Is human skill and manhood's power ;

And to Jehovah's might
Doth triumph or defeat belong ;
Nor is the victory for the strong,
But Heaven decrees the fight ;—
And ne'er betrays or scorns the trust
Of man or host whose cause is just,

Who on His aid rely ;
That book which best can teach to live,
And which alone to man can give
The knowledge how to die.

XXX.

Kind Reader ! here we leave them for a space ;
My hand is weary and my harp-strings jar ;
And while we pause each energy I'll brace,
And tune each chord to sing a note of war ;—
Though harsh my song, and more discordant far
Than the rude howl borean tempests fling,
Yet, it may be, some generous souls there are,
Whose kindly ear scorns not the feeble string,
And faltering voice with which this varied lay I sing.

Canto Fifth.

I.

AT length on each opposing camp,
Through misty clouds and vapours damp,
 The Sabbath morning rose ;
And such a Sabbath day as that
Ne'er on creation rose or set,
And mankind never witness'd yet
 So dread a Sabbath's close !—
O God ! that on thy holy day,
When man should worship thee and pray,
He should his fellow mortal slay !
 As if his hate and pride
The six deem'd not enough to make
The world a slaughter-house, to slake
His thirst of human blood, and wake
 Thy wrath so long defied,
But he the seventh too must take,
To let exulting demons see
His hatred and contempt of Thee !

And to astonish'd angels prove
The wonders of long-suffering love !

II.

Slowly the dark clouds pass'd away :
And lighter dawn'd the opening day :
First on La Belle Alliance's height,
Then Mont Saint Jean, appear'd the light,
Which to each army's view display'd
Their foe in battle form array'd ;
While stretching far on either side,
A valley did those hosts divide,
Through which in many a fleecy fold
Dense mists and floating vapours roll'd,
Until the clouds which fill'd the vale
Were swept away before the gale,
Showing a gently sloping plain,
Muddy and wet with recent rain.

III.

When Gaul's Imperial Chieftain saw
The clouds pass from the glen,
He waved his sabre, shouting, " Ha !
I have these English then !
Ere twice two hours they 'll wish, I ween,
That they in Albion still had been,
And Belgium's plains had never seen !"
And galloping along the height
His mighty host prepared for fight,

And in the front successively,
Ranged cannon, horse, and infantry,—
Who ardent and impatient seem'd
To rush upon the foe they deem'd
Before their power would quickly yield,
And fly defeated from the field !

IV.

Ah, Gallia ! little dost thou know
The tameless courage of thy foe !
Have Salamanca's blood-red plain,
Vimiera's, and Vittoria's slain,
And Talavera been in vain ?

And hast thou yet to know,
That British soldiers never yield,
And Wellesley never quits the field
Till victory rests upon his shield,

And prostrate is his foe ?
Ask Victor, Soult, Massena,—well,
I deem, with Marmont, they can tell :—

Dost thou their proof deny ?
Or, of thy martial prowess vain,
Would'st thou in battle-field again,
Another venture try ;
Since he who hath thy hosts o'erthrown,
And bravest leaders, one by one,
Who never yet defeat has known,
Stands forward undismay'd,

Against thy mightiest Chieftain now,
Whom, front to front, so often thou
 Hast wish'd to see array'd?
Go, then,—the issue shall declare
Whose brows the conqueror's crown shall wear.

V.

The British centre, dense and strong,
Round La Haye Sainte and Hougomont,
 Prepared for battle fray;
But not till many a knee had bent,
And many a prayer to heaven was sent,
That He who orders each event
 Would so o'errule the day,
That they might conquer in the fight,
Strike down tyrannic wrong and might,
And be of Freedom, Truth, and Right
 The firm support and stay.
Along the brow of Mont Saint Jean
The left wing stretch'd, and rested on
 The heights of Ter-la-Haye;
The right extended to Merke Braine,
Where, swollen by the recent rain,
 A stream, in foaming flood,
Rush'd through the vale which circled round,
Skirting the utmost verge of ground
 Where England's squadrons stood:

While farther back behind them lay
The vale and forest of Soignés,—
The scenes of many a wondrous deed,
Of woodman's skill and huntsman's speed,
By minstrels sung in bygone age,
Immortalised in Shakspeare's page.

VI.

Thus stood prepared on either height
Each host for sanguinary fight,
 Till hours had pass'd away,
As when, with mutual hatred fired,
Two lions, with like rage inspired,
 Meet by their destined prey,—
Watchful each stands with glaring eyes,
To seize his rival by surprise,
 And rend him limb from limb;
And woe, if for a moment's space,
Either should turn away his face,
 Or let his eyes grow dim!
'Twas thus the rival armies stood,
And cautiously each other view'd;—
Each Leader knew the other's skill,
His practised eye, and daring will,
Which, instant, could detect, and take
 Advantage of each movement made:
And never for so high a stake
 Was battle fought, or game e'er play'd.

VII.

At length a sudden movement ran
 Along the Gallic line,—
Horsemen and foot rush'd to the van,
And swiftly for the charge began
 Their columns to combine;
Then rose a cloud of fiery smoke,
And, louder far than thunder, broke
 The cannon's opening roar.
Down from the height the dense cloud roll'd,
Hiding within its sulphurous fold
 The swift advancing corps;
And soon emerging from the cloud,
With shouts which sounded long and loud
 Upon the plain below,
The British saw the squadrons proud
 Of their cuirass-clad foe.
“Britons, stand firm! in strength array'd,
The foe approaches!” Wellesley said.

VIII.

On flew the French, by Jerome led;
The earth, beneath their horses' tread,
 Shook, as they onward rush'd:
On, on they like a whirlwind came,
Midst wreathing smoke and flashing flame—
On, on they dash'd to death or fame,
 With hopes of conquest flush'd.

Firm as their native island rock,
The British troops received the shock
 Of Gaul's impetuous rage.
Fiercely and loud the clamour rang,
Terrific was the armour's clang,
 As foes with foes engage.
The fury of the French attack
Forced Nassau's hireling soldiers back
 In wreck and disarray.
Burning with rage for Nassau's shame,
Alten and Cook, whom nought could tame,
 Rush'd on amid the fray,
And with their followers stemm'd the tide
Of France's overweening pride ;
And aided by Macdonnell's might,
Who, like a lion, in the fight,
 His tartan'd clansmen led ;
And wheresoever fell his blows
There fell in heaps his slaughtered foes ;
 Till, foiled, at length they fled.
They fled but to renew the fight
With fiercer rage and greater might,
 For, as the French roll'd back
From every charge in disarray,
With still increasing numbers they
 Return'd to the attack.
But vain were numbers—vainer still
'Gainst British hearts was Gallic skill,

For still the glorious Guards stood fast,
And back their foes in tumult cast.

IX.

Thus, doubtful, furious, and long,
The conflict raged round Hougomont,
 And deafening was the din.
Yet fiercer still the battle grows,
And louder sounds the echoing blows,—
With equal fury foes meet foes,
 But neither lose nor win.
From loop-holed walls the British pour
A keen, incessant iron shower
 On the advancing Gaul.
With equal rage the Frenchmen ply
Their terrible artillery
 On Gomont's * batter'd wall.
With carnage earth is cover'd o'er,
The ground runs red with reeking gore ;
And, mingling with the artillery's roar,
 The battle shouts resound.
At length, by British valour foiled,
The French in disarray recoil'd
 From the contested ground :
While Home and Saltoun's Guards remain'd
Upon the ground so well maintain'd.

* Gomont is the correct name of what is generally called Hougomont.

X.

Round La Haye Sainte, with equal rage,
Did the terrific battle rage :
As roll the billows on the shore
When storms arise and tempests roar,
Sweeping in wild and thundering shock
Around each headland, point, and rock,
And threatening in their furious course
To 'gulf the shore which checks their force,—
So round Haye Sainte the French troops roll'd,
Impetuous and uncontroll'd,
And furious as that ocean's tide
When whirlwinds on its waters ride ;
But like those waves, when some stern rock
Unshaken meets their fiercest shock,
So, baffled, broken, shatter'd, foil'd,
The French from every charge recoil'd.

XI.

Napoleon stood upon a height
Watching the progress of the fight,
And, fired with rage, beheld the foe
His best and bravest troops o'erthrow,
And with impatience cried,—
“Forward, Mourand ! our troops give way !
And Soult retires in disarray.
On cuirassiers and infantry,
And turn the battle's tide !”

On, on, with Mouraud at their head,
The cuirassiers like lightning sped ;
And dreadful was the havoc made
Among their foes by horsemen's blade,
Who fail'd at first to stem the course
Of such an overpowering force :
With battle's wild excitement flush'd
On column upon column rush'd
 In terrible array ;
But, while disorder'd with success,
The French continuéd to press
 More strongly on La Haye,
Swift as the thunderbolts which fly
Across the tempest-darken'd sky,
And as resistless in their course,
On flew a charge of British horse ;
 And as they met their foes,
The neigh of steeds, the shout, the crash,
The cannon's roar, the armour's clash,
 In awful chorus rose :
The solid ground was toss'd and driven,
As if by sudden earthquake riven,
Yea, e'en the very clouds of heaven
 Vibrated with the sound.
Steeds, rearing, on each other dash'd,
And often horse and horseman smash'd
 Together on the ground.
'Twas man to man, and hand to hand ;
Foe fought with foe, brand clash'd on brand,

In quick successive blows ;
Until the cuirassiers again,
With hundreds trodden down and slain,
Roll'd back before their foes.

XII.

Meanwhile, far onward to the right,
Brave Picton still maintain'd the fight,
And with his Gaelsmen bold,
Unmoved received each fiery shock,
While mingling with the sultry smoke,
The livid gleams of battle broke,
And lurid round him roll'd.
In coats of mail and steel cuirass,
On, on, in overwhelming mass,
The French troops rush'd ; his kilted band
Still strove their progress to withstand
Both gallantly and well ;—
But vain their efforts to oppose
The mighty numbers of their foes,
For, one by one, beneath their blows
To earth they slaughter'd fell :
Yet still with courage unsubdu'd,
The noble Picton dauntless stood,
Though circled by a host.
And almost all his followers slain,
He still the conflict did maintain,
And on his foes, with proud disdain,
Defiance sternly toss'd !

Lord Wellington the danger view'd
In which the gallant Picton stood,
 And shouted, "Anglesea!
On to the rescue! see, our foes
In thousands round brave Picton close :—
 On, Kempt and Ponsonby!
By Heav'n! I'd rather lose the strife,
Or give mine own, ere Picton's life
 Paid for the victory!"

XIII.

With force no barrier could resist
The brave dragoons on swiftly press'd,
 Led by Lord Anglesea,
And Ponsonby the bold and brave,—
But all too late, alas! to save
Brave Picton from a soldier's grave,
 And but in time to see,
Amid a circle of the foe,
Fast on the ground his life's blood flow.
And as his noble spirit fled,
 He heard the Highland slogan rise,
And Erin's shout of vengeance dread
 Ring midst his reeling enemies!
As ocean's broken waves ree'de,
 So roll'd the Frenchmen back,
While England, with still greater speed,
 Rush'd on to the attack:

Their fury nothing could impede,
Red slaughter mark'd their track.

XIV.

Amongst his foes with havoc dread,
Brave Ponsonby far onward sped ;
Nor mark'd he, as he forward rush'd
With courage fired and ardour flush'd,
The Gaul in overwhelming force
On either side surround his course,
Until too late he found,
That further to advance was vain,
And hardly could he hope again
To reach the British ground ;
And now, with one brave follower, he
Was far amid the enemy :
He spurr'd his horse, but woe the day
He mounted such a slender steed,
And left behind his charger bay,
Which oft amid the battle fray
Had borne him safely on with speed

XV.

He spurr'd his steed, and forward went,
But breathless soon and overspent,
With hoofs deep sunk in clayey mud,
Its feeble limbs entangled stood ;
Alike unable to retire,
Or shelter seek from foemen's fire,

Which round the warrior pour'd like hail
When raging storms and winds prevail.
He look'd around,—no aid was near ;
But that was not a glance of fear,
But triumph, which illum'd the eye
Of death-despising Ponsonby,—
As calmly drawing from his breast
A portrait, which he fervid kiss'd,
He thus his aide-de-camp address'd,

In quick but gentle tone :—
“ My gallant friend, if you with life
Escape from this terrific strife,
O bear this to my lovely wife—

The likeness is her own !
And tell her, that in freedom's cause
I pour'd my blood, and her name was
Breathed from my lips with my last breath,
And hung upon my tongue in death ! ”

XVI.

Scarce to his aide-de-camp had he
Thus spoken, when around them flew
A troop of Polish lancers, who
Attack'd the gallant Ponsonby,
With all the wild ferocity
Which savage bosoms only know,
When in their power they see a foe,
And yet a shrinking terror feel
At sight of his uplifted steel :—

Like some dread monster of the wood
Whom long the hunters have pursued,
 When brought at length to bay,
Hemm'd in on every side, he stands
Glaring upon the glittering brands
 Which on him press to slay ;
So, circled round on every side,
The noble warrior stood and died !
Nor 'scaped his aide-de-camp to tell
How dauntlessly his leader fell ;
He scorn'd to fly before his foes,—
And could not long withstand their blows,
Preferring, rather than retreat,
To share his gallant leader's fate ;
And bravely fought, and nobly died,—
A hero, by a hero's side !

XVII.

With dark plumes waving o'er each brow,
The tartan'd sons of Seotia now—
 Still as the thunder cloud,
Ere peals athwart the hollow sky
The roar of heaven's artillery,
 With echo long and loud ;
Flew forward with the whirlwind's force,
A serried mass of foot and horse,
To meet their foes ; and onward too
The steel-clad Frenchmen swiftly flew,

Deeming by numbers to o'erthrow
The charge of their advancing foe ;
But onward still the British bore,
And, high above the cannon's roar,
The Highland foot and Scottish Greys
Their dreaded battle-cry did raise,—

“Scotland for ever !” was their shout
As forward to the charge they flew ;
And well, I ween, their foemen knew

That shout which had so oft rung out,
With import dread on every plain
In Portugal and thankless Spain ;—
That shout, which in Vimiera's fight,
Vittoria's rout, Busaco's height,
At Badajos and Talavera,
At Roliça and Albuera,
Barossa's ridge, Almeida's slain,
On Salamanca's gory plain,
At Orthez, and at Toulouse red,—
Where blood in bootless stream was shed,
That shout which aye to foeman's ear
Is pregnant with defeat and fear !

XVIII.

On, on the northern warriors bore,
O'er heaps of slain, through pools of gore ;
Kempt, Alten, Halket, Grant, and Pack,
Undaunted rush'd to the attack :

And Somerset, and Clinton too,
Cook, Lambert, Byng, and Vivian flew,
And many more of noble name

And dauntless heart were there ;
But none who own'd a brighter fame,
Or bolder heart than Walter Græme ;
Or could to higher honours claim

Than gallant Lord Delware ;
And none rush'd swifter on than they
To meet their foes in battle fray.

XIX.

The Gallie Chief mark'd from afar
The rolling tide of British war,
And trembled with dismay,
As back his boasted troops recoil'd
In wreck and disarray ;
His blood with rage within him boil'd,
To see, by British valour foil'd,
His veterans give way.

“ How irresistible in might
Those terrible gray-horsemen fight ! ”
Admiring much, but more in spite,
Thus Gaul's proud Leader cried,
As he beheld, swift rolling on,
The noble sons of Caledon,
In victory and pride :
And trying, as a last resource,
To turn the adverse battle's course

With his Imperial Guards, whom he
Had oft found in extremity
To seize the palm of victory
 When it seem'd all but lost.
On, on they dash'd in dread array,
Led by the ever dauntless Ney,
 Of France the pride and boast ;
D'Erlon, Milhaud, Foy, and Bertrand,
Exceelmans, Pajol, and Mourand,
 Reille, Vandame, and Labau ;
And Kellerman, whose daring hand
 Full well his foemen know ;
Duhesme, Drouet, Labedoyère ;
Devaux and Maret, too, were there,—
With many a brave and gallant name
High in the roll of martial fame.
Down from the height they sped full fast,
The intervening vale they pass'd,
 Array'd in all their might ;
And swift as some tornado's force,
Continued their impetuous course
 Up the opposing height.

XX.

The British Chief, who on that height
Watched every movement of the fight
Which surged and raged and roar'd around,
And fill'd the air and shook the ground,

Saw, with flush'd cheek and eager eye,
The old heroic Guards draw nigh
In swift and terrible array,
And springing forward from his post,
Flew on amid his serried host ;
For well he knew that with that band
The mighty struggle soon must end.
“ Britons, stand firm !—what will they say,
In England, if we lose the day ?
Brave soldiers, we must not be beat ;
Stand fast,—we'll win the battle yet !
Win it ! O had I now that host
 With which, ten months ago,
The rugged Pyrenees I cross'd—
 Disbanded at Bordeaux—
Ere now, in ruin wildly toss'd,
His standards taken, torn, or lost,
 Had been yon mighty foe ;
But yet, with Heaven's approving will
Our gallant bands shall conquer still.”*
'Twas thus, at times, the British Chief
Address'd his troops with greeting brief ;—
For he, regardless of his life,
Was ever in the fiercest strife,

* Some years after the battle of Waterloo, the Duke of Wellington said, “ If he had had the same army there he had crossed the Pyrenees with ten months before, and which was disbanded at Bordeaux, the battle of Waterloo would not have lasted *two hours*.”

Rather his men to check,—
Who burn'd, impatient, to advance
Against the boasted troops of France,—
And hold their courage back,
Than that their spirit did require
His presence to sustain its fire :
No, every Briton on that field
Will win or die,—but never yield !

XXI.

On came the Gaul, and swept around
The British squares, which to the ground
Seem'd rooted,—so unmoved they met
This last and terrible onset
Of the Imperial Guard, who came
With valour worthy of their fame.
They stirr'd not till great Wellesley gave
The word—"Advance ! my warriors brave ;
The foe hath ventured his last stake,
Nor can another effort make !
On, Guards ! the day is ours !" he cried ;
The soldiers with a shout replied,
And like a tempest-ridden tide
Rush'd forward on their foes.
Fast blows on blows successive fell,
And mingling with the conflict's yell,
Shouts, groans, and shrieks, in horrible
Commingle'd chorus rose ;

While loud the dread artillery roar'd,
And full five hundred cannon pour'd
 Ball, chain-shot, grape, and shell;
And fast as hail in winter's day,
An iron shower of musketry
 With dreadful havoc fell!

XXII.

Now, 'mid the thickest of the fight,
 Rush'd on the brave Delaware:
Before his arm of matchless might
The boldest foes shrunk with affright,
And woe unto the luckless wight
 Who did his vengeance dare;
Until a foe of bolder mien
Amidst the Gallie ranks was seen:
 And as he nearer came
His waving plume, and bearing bold,
The gallant Princee of Moskowa told,
 Than whose a braver name,
Did not in all the martial throng
Of France, to warrior belong.

XXIII.

The brave Delaware mark'd Marshal Ney,
And flew to meet him in the fray;
And meeting, for a moment's space,
Scann'd well each other's smoke-grim'd face,

While, with one foot advanced,
Each raised his sabre o'er his head,
Whose blade with reeking blood was red,
 Their eyes defiance glanced;
Then cautiously began the strife,
For well each knew that death or life
 Might on his arm depend.
The warriors equal power display'd—
Each plied with equal skill his blade—
 Fast did their blows descend;
Their sabres clashed with echoing clang,
With every blow their armour rang
 Far through the battle-field.
At length Delware received a stroke,
Which at the hilt his sabre broke,
 And wounded, backward reel'd.
Exulting in his victory,
 Ney cried—"Now, Briton, yield!
Delay not, or by heaven you die!"
"Then strike!" the prostrate hero said;
 "Delware has never seen
The foe of whom he was afraid;
And, but for my unfaithful blade,
Perchance the ground whereon I'm laid,
 Thy resting-place had been.
And had this adverse fate of mine,
Thou haughty warrior, been thine,
The cannon's roar and rolling drum
Had sounded thy viaticum!"

XXIV.

With passion fired, Ney raised his hand,
And pois'd aloft his dripping brand,
Prepar'd to pierce, with one fell blow,
The bosom of his bleeding foe.
But suddenly his arm was stay'd
By a fresh foeman's flashing blade ;
For like a wounded lion came,
All grim'd with smoke, and clay, and blood,
And o'er the wounded warrior stood
The young and gallant Græme,—
Who rais'd his broadsword in the air
Above the prostrate Lord Delware,
Exclaiming, as he turned away
The deadly thrust of furious Ney,
“ Hold ! shame on thee to aim a blow
At fallen and disarméd foe ! ”
Nor further spoke : in such a strife,
When nation's strive for fame or life,
Men have not time to waste in words—
Their only language is their swords.

XXV.

With eyes that glar'd like balls of fire,
Each warrior paused in furious ire,
And speedily one of those twain,
In mortal combat had been slain ;
But while they on each other gaz'd,
Erect for fight, with sabres raised,

The troops rush'd in on either side,
And deeper swell'd the battle's tide ;
And midst the dread, tumultuous throng,
Ney by the crowd was borne along,
Which back in wild confusion roll'd
Before the British legions bold.

XXVI.

Sir Walter Græme then turn'd and rais'd
The bleeding warrior from the ground ;
And as he strove to staunch the wound,
Delware on his preserver gaz'd
With feelings which no words could tell,
While from his eye a tear-drop fell
Of mingled grief, remorse, and shame,
And gratitude to Walter Græme :
Then, with emotions which defied
All efforts of control, he cried—
“ And is it, then, to thee I owe
My rescue from a ruthless foe ?
And was it thou who in the strife,
To shelter me, risk'd thine own life ?

Come, let me press thee to my heart—
And pray forgive my pride and scorn,
Which thou hast ever meekly borne,

Though keen, I know, hath been the smart ;
And now, shouldst thou escape with life,
From this terrific field of strife,

And since thou dost so nobly prove
How much thou dost my daughter love,
With my best blessing she shall be
United, noble Græme, to thee !
Perchance she slightly may atone
For wrongs which I to thee have done !”

Sir Walter heard these words, and stood
Entranc'd with joy ; he could not speak—
His glowing eye and flushing cheek

Plainer far than language could
His ecstasy of soul confess'd ;
He spoke not, but in silence press'd,
With fervent clasp, the proffer'd hand
The noble warrior did extend.

XXVII.

Two hours ere noon began the fray,
And raged throughout the summer's day ;
And fiercely still, at evening's close,
With slaughter red, foes rush'd on foes ;
Till, foil'd at length and forc'd to yield,
The French were driven from the field ;
When, as they back in ruin reel'd,

That instant in the west,
Ere yet he sunk, forth through a cloud,
Which all day like a floating shroud

Had hidden his bright crest,
With lurid beam the red sun broke,
Piercing the sulphury battle smoke,

And on the British columns shed,
As on in victory they sped,

A ray of dazzling glory ;
And seem'd to linger on the height,
Watching the fortune of the fight,
Till victory shone on Britain's might—

Then rush'd to tell the story
To other worlds,—if worlds there be
That this sublunar orb can see,
Or care ought for its destiny,—
That Europe, yea, the world, is free,
And England's power proclaim ;
And tell of the achievements done
That day by mighty Wellington,
And publish forth his fame,
Till distant spheres, and world's unknown
To mortal ken shall bless and own
The glory of his name.

XXVIII.

Napoleon mark'd amid the fray
His "Sacred Band"* in disarray
And ruin wildly toss'd ;
While far upon his right he viewed,
Fast issuing from Saint Lambert's wood,
The van of Prussia's host :

* Napoleon called his famous *Invincible* Guards by the name of "Sacred Band."

And onward, in resistless tide,
The British rush in victor pride,—
When, frantic with despair, he cried,
 “*Sauve qui peut !*—all is lost !”
Then wild the scene, and horrible
And fearful was the conflict's swell,
As, mingled with the victims' yell,
 And shrieks of dread despair,
Loudly upon their flying foes,
The British shout of victory rose
 Triumphant in the air.

XXIX.

“Let's save ourselves !” Napoleon said,
And soon his selfish warning spread
With lightning's speed throughout the throng
That roll'd tumultuously along :—
“*Sauve qui peut !*” then on every side
The Gaul amid the battle cried ;
Their arms in terror from them toss'd,
And fled with shouts of “All is lost !”
Napoleon saw the ruin spread,
And, turning, spurr'd his horse and fled ;
And there forsook in danger's hour,
Leaving a prey to foemen's power,
Those troops who had so nobly stood,
And for his cause pour'd forth their blood.

In vain they call on him to lead,
And still for him they'll win or bleed.
All heedless of their fate, he flies
In terror from his enemies.

He who so lately aped a god,
And deem'd that kingdoms at his nod
Would fawning sue, and trembling bow
Before the blood-ensanguined crown
Which sat on his tyrannie brow,

Nor dare provoke his wrathful frown,
Now flies a ruin'd fugitive,
Afraid to die, still fain to live,—

More like a bandit than a King !
He shuns the fate he should have sought ;—
O Bonaparte, who would have thought
Thee such a worthless thing !

Hadst thou been what thy country deem'd,
And what thou for a time e'en seem'd—

A Hero,—on that battle-field,
Where thy brave troops so nobly fought,
A soldier's death thou shouldst have sought,
And died upon thy broken shield.

What ! thou a Hero !—if that name
Thou ever hast presumed to claim,

'Tis lost for ever now :—
Thy pride, thy power, thy martial fame,
Are broken, sunk, and turn'd to shame—
Thy cowardice and flight proclaim
How mean a thing art thou !

Go, then, and tell to hapless Gaul
Thou saw'st—for thee—her bravest fall,
 While thou didst shun their fate,
And fled—nor once essay'd to save
A wreck of thy forsaken brave,
 Who worshipp'd thee so late !

XXX.

Ney still with desperate courage fought,
And vainly death in battle sought,
And bravely strove to stem the tide
Of conquest, which no power could bide.
The hardy children of the north,
With Erin's fiery sons rush'd forth,
And, as they dash'd amid their foes,
Loud through the din their war-ery rose :
The battle slogan of the Gael,
 And Erin's dread hurrah,
Made Gallia's boldest hearts grow pale,
As, swiftly rushing from the vale,
 Their serried ranks they saw.
Nor were the sturdy English slow
To hurl destruction on their foe :
Their silent, stern, and solid band
Nought could impede, oppose, withstand.

XXXI.

The brave Mourand beheld with grief
The dastard flight of Gallia's Chief,

And heard with rage, amid the host,
The craven cry of—"All is lost!"

And "*Sauvons, sauvez vous !*"

His scabbard to the ground he toss'd,

And midst the slaughter flew,

Determined on that field of strife

A soldier's death to die,

And never, to preserve his life,

Before his foes to fly.

On like a thunderbolt he sped,

Nor paused until his steed lay dead

Beneath him on the field ;

When, springing up, still unsubdued,

Stain'd by his dying charger's blood,

Alone amid his foes he stood,

Who call'd on him to yield.

"No ! never shall a foeman's ear

From me the word surrender hear !"

He cried ; "for on this field I'll die

For Glory, France, or Victory !"

Unwilling that so brave a foe

Should fall in such a hopeless strife,

The British cried, "Go, warrior, go !

Thy boldness has preserved thy life."

'Then, with a look of haughty pride—

"I came not here," Count Mourand cried,

"From British hands my life to crave :

Think ye, I am so mean a slave

As tremble for a fate I scorn ?
For know that I this day have sworn
 In battle to expire !
Britons, your offer'd grace I spurn !
 And now, your wrath to fire,
Have my defiance, bold and high,
And thus your vengeance I defy !”
He said, and from a pistol sent
 A ball amongst his foes,
Which through a soldier's bosom went—
And as his comrades saw the rent
 A yell of vengeance rose,
And in an instant, on the sand,
A bleeding corse lay Count Mourand.

XXXII.

By this, before the British might,
The Gaul from Belle Alliance's height
 In tumult and destruction fled.
Before them, Prussia's ardent host
Their ranks in wilder ruin toss'd ;
 Behind, was death and carnage red :
The foremost died, the hindmost bled,
And fell in mingled slaughter dread.
That army which at morning's tide,
Array'd in all a nation's pride,
Stood flush'd with hope, and full of life,
With courage keen for battle strife—

Where is its boasting now? alas!
A shatter'd, wild, tumultuous mass
Of mingled ruin now it flies
From its victorious enemies!
Who turns to fight, but turns to die,
And death takes him who turns to fly!*

XXXIII.

It needs not, Reader, that I tell
Who bravest fought, and noblest fell,
Amid that battle fray:
Did I attempt to tell each name
That gain'd renown and deathless fame,
Upon that glorious day,
'Twould be—hard task—but to rehearse
That morning's battle roll in verse,
For all in deeds of glory vied,
And with like courage fought or died;
Such were an endless theme, yet still,
Such names as Somerset and Hill,
Saltoun and Anglesea,
Clinton, Grant, Maitland, Cooke and Græme,
Halket, and Kempt of glorious name,
Byng, Adam, Barnes, of martial fame,
Picton and Ponsonby;
Delancey, Lambert, Alten, Pack,

* “Who fights finds death, and death finds him who flies.”—VIRGIL.

Macdonnell, Gordon, whose attack
Made France's bravest troops roll back,
 Vivian and Vandeleur ;
Home, Warrington, and Douglas, too,
And Stapleton, the brave and true ;
Such names as these might well prolong,
And give a halo to my song
 That ever should endure—
Names which shall never be forgot,
Though he who sings this tuneless note
 May in oblivion lie ;
Whose high renown shall be the theme
Of poet's song and hero's dream,
And through succeeding ages beam
 With dazzling brillianey.
And Blucher, faithless were my tongue,
And worthless were the minstrel's song,
 If he denied to thee
The glory thou so fairly won,
And shar'd with greater Wellington,
 In that proud victory.

XXXIV.

And thou who for a world enslav'd
The chilling taunts of envy brav'd,
 And Freedom's guardian stood,
And boldly breath'd in danger's hour,

Defiance to the despot's power,
 And scorn'd his fiercest mood ;
Thou Champion, who, in Europe's cause,
Restored pale Freedom's trampled laws,
Nor in thy bright career didst pause
 Till thou hadst freed the world ;
And Portugal and Spain had been
Cheer'd by thy glorious banner's sheen,
And Gallia had thy standard seen
 Triumphantly unfurl'd !—
Great Wellington, should e'er this page—
Vain thought, I fear—thine eyes engage,
With kindness look upon my lay,
And cast it not, in scorn, away ;
Nor of my boldness harshly deem
For daring such a lofty theme.*

XXXV.

And you, ye gallant, glorious Band,—
War-heroes of your native land,
Well might your deeds of martial fame
The song of prouder minstrel claim,—
For, evermore, your names will be
A talisman of victory,
When nations struggle to be free ;
And tyrants long shall quake with fear
When Waterloo sounds in their ear !

* This was written during the life-time of the Duke.

And freeborn men will bless the glorious fight
Where ye so well maintain'd fair Europe's right,
And broke the Tyrant's chains, and crush'd the Despot's
might !

XXXVI.

And thou, whose lustful love of power
Made vengeance long upon thee lower,
Till thy ambition roused the blow,
And waked the wrath that o'er thy head
Burst forth with sweeping fury dread,
And prostrate laid thee low—
Begone, thou puppet ! for thy day
For ever now has pass'd away,
Go to thy prison rock ;—
Go, go by earth and heaven accursed !
Thy bubble is for ever burst,
The demon which thy bosom nurs'd,
Thy misery doth mock !
And there, like him whom poets tell,
'Neath Jove's avenging fury fell,
Endure thy retributive fate,
While vultures of ambition gnaw,
And tear thy heart with gory claw,
Unceasing and insatiate !
Go, chafe and foam in petty rage,
Because thou canst no more engage,
In bloodshed, spoil, and war ;

Go, strut, and fret, and vent thy spleen,
And show how abject, poor, and mean,

Such things as tyrants are !

And like a child by passion toss'd,
For worthless toy, or bauble lost,

Thy clamorous grief proclaim ;
Because the crown thy temples bore,
Will never grace thy forehead more,
And perish'd is thy fame.

XXXVII.

Oh, when I think of thee in youth,
By ardour fired, pursuing truth,

By truth to justice led ;

Or, springing forth amidst a wild,
Chaotic scene around thee piled,
When, suddenly, beneath thy hand,
As if by some eucharter's wand,

Thy country's ruin fled,
And at thy bidding France arose,
The fear and wonder of her foes,—
I scarce can think thou art the same,
So sunk in crime, so lost to fame !

Hadst thou employ'd for higher ends
Thy mighty mind and busy hands,

What might'st thou not have done ?
Thou might'st have made thy country great,
A glorious, free, and happy state,
As ever saw the sun,

And given a halo to thy name
Of pure and never-dying fame ;
But thou thy talents misapplied
To self-aggrandisement and pride,
And mad Ambition's phantom ray
Lured thee too readily astray,
Until aggression, war, and strife
Became thy very breath of life,
 And kindled in thy brain
The thirst of universal power,
To see in slavish terror eower
 The world beneath thy reign.
Go, go, and let thy history
A lesson and a warning be,
That Heaven is just, and crime and wrong,
However powerful and strong,
Not even on earth, can prosper long.

THE END.

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